ITALY;

WITH SKETCHES OF

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

VOL. I

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ITALY;

WITH SKETCHES OF

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "VATHEK."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I

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ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME justly admired Authors having condescended to glean a few stray thoughts from these Letters, which have remained dormant a great many years; I have been at length emboldened to lay them before the public. Perhaps, as they happen to contain passages which persons of acknowledged taste have honoured with their notice, they may possibly be less unworthy of emerging from the shade into daylight than I imagined.

Most of these Letters were written in the bloom and heyday of youthful spirits and youthful confidence, at a period when the old order of things existed with all its picturesque pomps and absurdities; when Venice enjoyed her piombi and

submarine dungeons; France her bastile; the Peninsula her holy Inquisition. To look back upon what is beginning to appear almost a fabulous era in the eyes of the modern children of light, is not unamusing or uninstructive; for, still better to appreciate the present, we should be led not unfrequently to recall the intellectual muzziness of the past.

But happily these pages are not crowded with such records: they are chiefly filled with delineations of landscape, and those effects of natural phenomena which it is not in the power of revolutions or constitutions to alter or destroy.

A few moments snatched from the contemplation of political crimes, bloodshed, and treachery, are a few moments gained to all lovers of innocent illusion. Nor need the statesman or the scholar despise the occasional relaxation of light reading. When Jupiter and the great deities are represented by Homer as retiring from scenes of havoc and carnage to visit the blameless and quiet Ethiopians, who were the farthest removed

of all nations, the Lord knows whither, at the very extremities of the ocean,—would they have given ear to manifestos or protocols? No, they would much rather have listened to the Tales of Mother Goose.

London, June 12th, 1834.

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THE LOW COUNTRIES

AND

GERMANY.


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THE LOW COUNTRIES

AND

GERMANY.

LETTER I.

Passage to Ostend.—The Capuchin church.—Ghent.—Quiet and Content, the presiding deities of Flanders.—Antwerp.—The Place de Meir.—Silence and solitude of the town, contrasted with the tumult and uproar of London.

Ostend, 21st June, 1780.

We had a rough passage, and arrived at this imperial haven in a piteous condition. Notwithstanding its renown and importance, it is but a scurvy place—preposterous Flemish roofs disgust your eyes when cast upwards,—swaggering Dutch skippers and mongrel smugglers are the principal objects they meet with below; and then the whole atmosphere is impregnated with the

fumes of tobacco, burnt peat, and garlick. I should esteem myself in luck, were the nuisances of this seaport confined only to two senses; but, alas! the apartment above my head proves a squalling brattery, and the sounds which proceed from it are so loud and frequent, that a person might think himself in limbo, without any extravagance.

In hope of some relief, I went to the Capuchin church, a large solemn building, in search of silence and solitude; but here again was I disappointed. There happened to be an exposition of the holy wafer with ten thousand candles; and whilst half-a-dozen squeaking fiddles fugued and flourished away in the galleries, and as many paralytic monks gabbled before the altars, a whole posse of devotees, in long white hoods and flannels, were sweltering on either side.

This papal piety, in warm weather, was no very fragrant circumstance; so I sought the open air again as fast as I was able. The serenity of the evening — for the black huddle of clouds, which the late storms had accumulated, were all melted away — tempted me to the ramparts. There, at least, thought I to myself, I may range

undisturbed, and talk with my old friends the breezes, and address my discourse to the waves, and be as romantic and fanciful as I please; but I had scarcely begun a poetic apostrophe, before out flaunted a whole rank of officers, with ladies and abbés and puppy dogs, singing, and flirting, and making such a hubbub, that I had not one peaceful moment to observe the bright tints of the western horizon, or enjoy those ideas of classic antiquity which a calm sunset never fails to bring before my imagination.

Finding, therefore, no quiet abroad, I returned to my inn, and should have gone immediately to bed, in hopes of relapsing into the bosom of dreams and delusions; but the limbo I mentioned before grew so very outrageous, that I was obliged to postpone my rest till sugarplums and nursery eloquence had hushed it to repose. At length peace was restored, and about eleven o'clock I fell into a slumber. My dreams anticipated the classic scenes of Italy, the proposed term of my excursion.

Next morning I arose refreshed with these agreeable impressions. No ideas, but such as Nemi and Albano suggested, haunted me whilst

travelling to Ghent. I neither heard the coarse dialect which was talking around me, nor noticed the formal avenues and marshy country which we passed. When we stopped to change horses, I closed my eyes upon the dull prospect, and was transported immediately to those Grecian solitudes which Theocritus so enchantingly describes.

To one so far gone in the poetic lore of ancient days, Ghent is not the most likely place to recall his attention; and I know nothing more about it, than that it is a large, ill-paved, plethoric, pompous-looking city, with a decent proportion of convents and chapels, monuments, brazen gates, and gilded marbles. In the great church were several pictures by Rubens, so striking, so masterly, as to hold me broad awake; though, I must own, there are moments when I could contentedly fall asleep in a Flemish cathedral, for the mere chance of beholding in vision the temple of Olympian Jupiter.

But I think I hear, at this moment, some grave and respectable personage chiding my enthusiasm — "Really, sir, you had better stay at home, and dream in your great chair, than give

yourself the trouble of going post through Europe, in search of places where to fall asleep. If Flanders and Holland are to be dreamed over at this rate, you had better take ship at once, and doze all the way to Italy." Upon my word, I should not have much objection to that scheme; and, if some enchanter would but transport me in an instant to the summit of Ætna, anybody might slop through the Low Countries that pleased.

Being, however, so far advanced, there is no retracting; and I am resolved to journey along with Quiet and Content for my companions. These two comfortable deities have, I believe, taken Flanders under their especial protection; every step one advances discovering some new proof of their influence. The neatness of the houses, and the universal cleanliness of the villages, show plainly that their inhabitants live in ease and good humour. All is still and peaceful in these fertile lowlands: the eye meets nothing but round unmeaning faces at every door, and harmless stupidity smiling at every window. The beasts, as placid as their masters, graze on without any disturbance; and I scarcely recollect to have heard

one grunting swine or snarling mastiff during my whole progress. Before every village is a wealthy dunghill, not at all offensive, because but seldom disturbed; and there sows and porkers bask in the sun, and wallow at their ease, till the hour of death and bacon arrives.

But it is high time to lead you towards Antwerp. More rich pastures, more ample fields of grain, more flourishing willows! A boundless plain lies before this city, dotted with cows, and speckled with flowers; a level whence its spires and quaint roofs are seen to advantage! The pale colours of the sky, and a few gleams of watery sunshine, gave a true Flemish cast to the scenery, and everything appeared so consistent, that I had not a shadow of pretence to think myself asleep.

After crossing a broad expanse of river, edged on one side by beds of osiers beautifully green, and on the other by gates and turrets preposterously ugly, we came through several streets of lofty houses to our inn. Its situation in the "Place de Meir," a vast open space surrounded by buildings above buildings, and roof above roof, has something striking and singular. A tall gilt crucifix of bronze, sculptured by Cortels of

Malines,* adds to its splendour; and the tops of some tufted trees, seen above a line of magnificent hotels, add greatly to the effect of the perspective.

It was almost dusk when we arrived; and as I am very partial to new objects discovered by this dubious, visionary light, I went immediately a rambling. Not a sound disturbed my meditations: there were no groups of squabbling children or talkative old women. The whole town seemed retired into their inmost chambers; and I kept winding and turning about, from street to street, and from alley to alley, without meeting a single inhabitant. Now and then, indeed, one or two women in long cloaks and mantles glided by at a distance; but their dress was so shroud-like, and their whole appearance so ghostly, that I should have been afraid to accost them. As night approached, the ranges of buildings grew more and more dim, and the silence which reigned amongst them more awful. The canals,

* This crucifix was made of the bronze which had formed the statue of the terrible Duke of Alva, swept in its first form from the citadel where it was proudly stationed, in a moment of popular fury.

which in some places intersect the streets, were likewise in perfect solitude, and there was just light sufficient for me to observe on the still waters the reflection of the structures above them. Except two or three tapers glimmering through the casements, no one circumstance indicated human existence. I might, without being thought very romantic, have imagined myself in the city of petrified people which Arabian fabulists are so fond of describing. Were any one to ask my advice upon the subject of retirement, I should tell him — By all means repair to Antwerp. No village amongst the Alps, or hermitage upon Mount Lebanon, is less disturbed: you may pass your days in this great city without being the least conscious of its sixty thousand inhabitants, unless you visit the churches. There, indeed, are to be heard a few devout whispers, and sometimes, to be sure, the bells make a little chiming; but, walk about, as I do, in the twilights of midsummer, and be assured your ears will be free from all molestation.

You can have no idea how many strange, amusing fancies played around me whilst I wandered along; nor how delighted I was with the novelty

of my situation. But a few days ago, thought I within myself, I was in the midst of all the tumult and uproar of London: now, as if by some magic influence, I am transported to a city equally remarkable indeed for streets and edifices, but whose inhabitants seem cast into a profound repose. What a pity that we cannot borrow some small share of this soporific disposition! It would temper that restless spirit which throws us sometimes into such dreadful convulsions. However, let us not be too precipitate in desiring so dead a calm; the time may arrive when, like Antwerp, we may sink into the arms of forgetfulness; when a fine verdure may carpet our Exchange, and passengers traverse the Strand without any danger of being smothered in crowds or crushed by carriages.

Reflecting, in this manner, upon the silence of the place, contrasted with the important bustle which formerly rendered it so famous, I insensibly drew near to the cathedral, and found myself, before I was aware, under its stupendous tower. It is difficult to conceive an object more solemn or more imposing than this edifice at the hour I first beheld it. Dark shades hindered my

examining the lower galleries; their elaborate carved work was invisible; nothing but huge masses of building met my sight, and the tower, shooting up four hundred and sixty-six feet in the air, received an additional importance from the gloom which prevailed below. The sky being perfectly clear, several stars twinkled through the mosaic of the pinnacles, and increased the charm of their effect.

Whilst I was indulging my reveries, a ponderous bell struck ten, and such a peal of chimes succeeded, as shook the whole edifice, notwithstanding its bulk, and drove me away in a hurry. I need not say, no mob obstructed my passage. I ran through a succession of streets, free and unmolested, as if I had been skimming along over the downs of Wiltshire. The voices of my servants conversing before the hotel were the only sounds which the great "Place de Meir" echoed.

This characteristic stillness was the more pleasing, when I looked back upon those scenes of outcry and horror which filled London but a week or two ago, when danger was not confined to night only, and to the environs of the capital,

but haunted our streets at mid-day. Here, I could wander over an entire city; stray by the port, and venture through the most obscure alleys, without a single apprehension; without beholding a sky red and portentous with the light of houses on fire, or hearing the confusion of shouts and groans mingled with the reports of artillery. I can assure you, I think myself very fortunate to have escaped the possibility of another such week of desolation, and to be peaceably lullea at Antwerp.

LETTER II.

Visit to the cabinets of pictures in Antwerp.—Monsieur Van Lenkeren's collection.—The Canon Knyff's house and gallery of paintings.—The Canon himself.—His domestic felicity.—Revisit the cathedral.—Grand service in honour of Saint John the Baptist.—Mynheer Van den Bosch, the organist's astonishing flashes of execution.—Evening service in the cathedral.—Magical effect of the music of Jomelli.—Blighted avenues.—Slow travelling.—Enter the United Provinces.—Level scenery.—Chinese prospects.—Reach Meerdyke.—Arrival at the Hague.

Antwerp, 23rd June, 1780.

AFTER breakfast this morning I began my pilgrimage to all the cabinets of pictures in Antwerp. First, I went to Monsieur Van Lenkeren's, who possesses a suite of apartments, lined, from the base to the cornice, with the rarest productions of the Flemish school. Heaven forbid I should enter into a detail of their niceties! I might as well count the dew-drops upon the most spangled of Van Huysum's flower-pieces, or the pimples

on their possessor's countenance; a very good sort of man, indeed; but from whom I was not at all sorry to be delivered.

My joy was, however, of short duration, as a few minutes brought me into the court-yard of the Canon Knyff's habitation; a snug abode, well furnished with ample fauteuils and orthodox couches. After viewing the rooms on the first floor, we mounted an easy staircase, and entered an ante-chamber, which they who delight in the imitations of art rather than of nature, in the likenesses of joint stools and the portraits of tankards, would esteem most capitally adorned: but it must be confessed, that amongst these uninteresting performances are dispersed a few striking Berghems and agreeable Polembergs. In the gallery adjoining, two or three Rosa de Tivolis merit observation; and a large Teniers, representing the Hermit St. Anthony surrounded by a malicious set of imps and leering devilesses, is well calculated to display the whimsical buffoonery of a Dutch imagination.

I was enjoying this strange medley, when the canon made his appearance; and a most prepossessing figure he has, according to Flemish ideas. In my humble opinion, his reverence looked a

little muddled or so; and, to be sure, the description I afterwards heard of his style of living favours not a little my surmises. This worthy dignitary, what with his private fortune and the good things of the church, enjoys a spanking revenue, which he contrives to get rid of in the joys of the table and the encouragement of the pencil.

His servants, perhaps, assist not a little in the expenditure of so comfortable an income; the canon being upon a very social footing with them all. At four o'clock in the afternoon, a select party attend him in his coach to an ale-house about a league from the city; where a table, well spread with jugs of beer and handsome cheeses, waits their arrival. After enjoying this rural fare, the same equipage conducts them back again, by all accounts, much faster than they came; which may well be conceived, as the coachman is one of the brightest wits of the entertainment.

My compliments, alas! were not much appreciated, you may suppose, by this jovial personage. I said a few favourable words of Polemberg, and offered up a small tribute of praise to the memory of Berghem; but, as I could not prevail upon

Mynheer Knyff to expand, I made one of my best bows, and left him to the enjoyment of his domestic felicity.

In my way home, I looked into another cabinet, the greatest ornament of which was a most sublime thistle by Snyders, of the heroic size, and so faithfully imitated that I dare say no Ass could see it unmoved. At length, it was lawful to return home; and as I positively refused visiting any more cabinets in the afternoon, I sent for a harpsichord of Rucker, and played myself quite out of the Netherlands.

It was late before I finished my musical excursion, and I took advantage of this dusky moment to revisit the cathedral. A flight of starlings had just pitched on one of the pinnacles of the tower, whose faint chirpings were the only sounds that broke the evening stillness. Not a human form appeared at any of the windows around; no footsteps were audible in the opening before the grand entrance; and, during the half hour I spent in walking to and fro, one solitary Franciscan was the only creature that accosted me. From him I learned that a grand service was to be performed next day in honour of St. John the Baptist, and the best music in Flanders would

be called forth on the occasion, so I determined to stay one day longer at Antwerp.

Having taken this resolution, I availed myself of a special invitation from Mynheer Van den Bosch, the first organist of the place, and sat next to him in his lofty perch during the celebration of high mass. The service ended, I strayed about the aisles, and examined the innumerable chapels which decorate them, whilst Mynheer Van den Bosch thundered and lightened away upon his huge organ with fifty stops.

When the first flashes of execution had a little subsided, I took an opportunity of surveying the celebrated Descent from the Cross. This has ever been esteemed the master-piece of Rubens, which, large as it is, they pretend here that Old Lewis Baboon* offered to cover with gold. A swingeing St. Christopher, fording a brook with a child on his shoulders, cannot fail of attracting attention. This colossal personage is painted on the folding-doors which defend the grand effort of art just mentioned from vulgar eyes; and here Rubens has selected a very proper subject to display the gigantic boldness of his pencil.

* The History of John Bull explains this ridiculous appellation

After I had most dutifully surveyed all his productions in this church, I walked half over Antwerp in quest of St. John's relics, which were moving about in procession. If my eyes were not much regaled by the saint's magnificence, my ears were greatly affected in the evening by the music which sang forth his praises. The cathedral was crowded with devotees, and perfumed with incense. A motet, in the lofty style of Jomelli, performed with taste and feeling, transported me to Italian climates; and I grieved, when a cessation dissolved the charm, to think that I had still so many tramontane regions to pass before I could in effect reach that classic country. Finding it was in vain to expect preternatural interposition, and perceiving no conscious angel or Loretto-vehicle waiting in some dark consecrated corner to bear me away, I humbly returned to my hotel.

Monday, June 26th.—We were again upon the pavé, rattling and jumbling along between clipped hedges and blighted avenues. The plagues of Egypt have been renewed, one might almost imagine, in this country, by the appearance of the oak trees: not a leaf have the insects spared. After having had the displeasure of

seeing no other objects for several hours but these blasted rows, the scene changed to vast tracts of level country, buried in sand and smothered with heath; the particular character of which I had but too good an opportunity of intimately knowing, as a tortoise might have kept pace with us without being once out of breath.

Towards evening, we entered the dominions of the United Provinces, and had all their glory of canals, treck-schuyts, and windmills, before us. The minute neatness of the villages, their red roofs, and the lively green of the willows which shade them, corresponded with the ideas I had formed of Chinese prospects; a resemblance which was not diminished upon viewing on every side the level scenery of enamelled meadows, with stripes of clear water across them, and innumerable barges gliding busily along. Nothing could be finer than the weather; it improved each moment, as if propitious to my exotic fancies; and, at sun-set, not one single cloud obscured the horizon. Several storks were parading by the water side, amongst flags and osiers; and, as far as the eye could reach, large herds of beautifully spotted cattle were enjoying the plenty of their

pastures. I was perfectly in the environs of Canton, or Ning Po, till we reached Meerdyke. You know fumigations are always the current recipe in romance to break an enchantment; as soon, therefore, as I left my carriage and entered my inn, the clouds of tobacco which filled every one of its apartments dispersed my Chinese imaginations, and reduced me in an instant to Holland.

Why should I enlarge upon my adventures at Meerdyke? To tell you that its inhabitants are the most uncouth bipeds in the universe would be nothing very new or entertaining; so let me at once pass over the village, leave Rotterdam, and even Delft, that great parent of pottery, and transport you with a wave of my pen to the Hague.

As the evening was rather warm, I immediately walked out to enjoy the shade of the long avenue which leads to Scheveling, and proceeded to the village on the sea coast, which terminates the perspective. Almost every cottage door being open to catch the air, I had an opportunity of looking into their neat apartments. Tables, shelves, earthenware, all glisten with cleanliness; the country people were drinking

tea, after the fatigues of the day, and talking over its bargains and contrivances.

I left them to walk on the beach, and was so charmed with the vast azure expanse of ocean, which opened suddenly upon me, that I remained there a full half hour. More than two hundred vessels of different sizes were in sight, the last sunbeam purpling their sails, and casting a path of innumerable brilliants athwart the waves. What would I not have given to follow this shining track! It might have conducted me straight to those fortunate western climates, those happy isles which you are so fond of painting, and I, of dreaming about. But, unluckily, this passage was the only one my neighbours the Dutch were ignorant of. It is true they have islands rich in spices, and blessed with the sun's particular attention, but which their government, I am apt to imagine, renders by no means fortunate.

Abandoning therefore all hopes of this adventurous voyage, I returned towards the Hague, and looked into a country-house of the late Count Bentinck, with parterres and bosquets by no means resembling, one should conjecture, the gardens of the Hesperides. But, consider-

ing that the whole group of trees, terraces, and verdure were in a manner created out of hills of sand, the place may claim some portion of merit. The walks and alleys have all the stiffness and formality which our ancestors admired; but the intermediate spaces, being dotted with clumps and sprinkled with flowers, are imagined in Holland to be in the English style. An Englishman ought certainly to behold it with partial eyes, since every possible attempt has been made to twist it into the taste of his country.

I need not say how liberally I bestowed my encomiums on Count Bentinck's tasteful intentions; nor how happy I was, when I had duly serpentized over his garden, to find myself once more in the grand avenue. All the way home, I reflected upon the unyielding perseverance of the Dutch, who raise gardens from heaps of sand, and cities out of the bosom of the waters. I had, almost at the same moment, a whimsical proof of the thrifty turn of this people; for just entering the town I met an unwieldy fellow — not ill clad — airing his carcase in a one-dog chair. The poor animal puffed and panted, Mynheer smoked, and gaped around him with the most blessed indifference.

LETTER III.

The Prince of Orange's cabinet of paintings.—Temptation of St. Anthony, by Breughel.—Exquisite pictures by Berghem and Wouvermans.—Mean garrets stored with inestimable productions of the Indies.—Enamelled flasks of oriental essences.—Vision of the wardrobe of Hecuba.—Disenchantment.—Cabinet of natural history.—A day dream.—A delicious morsel.—Dinner at Sir Joseph Yorke's.—Two honourable boobies.—The Great Wood.—Parterres of the Greffier Fagel.—Air poisoned by the sluggish canals.—Fishy locality of Dutch banquetting rooms.—Derivation of the inhabitants of Holland.—Origin and use of enormous galligaskins.—Escape from damp alleys and lazy waters.

30th June, 1780.

I DEDICATED the morning to the Prince of Orange's cabinet of paintings and curiosities both natural and artificial. Amongst the pictures which amused me the most is a temptation of the holy hermit St. Anthony, by Hell-fire Breughel, who has shown himself right worthy of the title; for a more diabolical variety of imps never entered the human imagination. Breughel has made his saint take refuge in a ditch filled with harpies

and creeping things innumerable, whose malice, one should think, would have lost Job himself the reputation of patience. Castles of steel and fiery turrets glare on every side, whence issue a band of junior devils. These seem highly entertained with pinking poor Anthony, and whispering, I warrant ye, filthy tales in his ear. Nothing can be more rueful than the patient's countenance; more forlorn than his beard; more piteous than his eye, forming a strong contrast to the pert winks and insidious glances of his persecutors; some of whom, I need not mention, are evidently of the female kind.

But really I am quite ashamed of having detained you in such bad company so long; and had I a moment to spare, you should be introduced to a better set in this gallery, where some of the most exquisite Berghems and Wouvermans I ever beheld would delight you for hours. I do not think you would look much at the Polembergs; there are but two, and one of them is very far from capital; in short, I am in a great hurry; so pardon me, Carlo Cignani! if I do not do justice to your merit; and forgive me, Potter! if I pass by your herds without leaving a tribute of admiration.

Mynheer Van Something was as eager to precipitate my step as I was to get out of the damps and perplexities of Sorgvliet yesterday evening; so, mounting a creaking staircase, he led me to a suite of garretlike apartments; which, considering the meanness of their exterior, I was rather surprised to find stored with some of the most valuable productions of the Indies. Gold cups enriched with gems, models of Chinese palaces in ivory, glittering armour of Hindostan, and Japan caskets, filled every corner of this awkward treasury. The most pleasing of all its baubles in my estimation was a large coffer of most elaborate workmanship, containing enamelled flasks of oriental essences, enough to perfume a zennana. If disagreeable fumes, as I mentioned before, dissolve enchantments, such aromatic oils have doubtless the power of raising them; for whilst I scented their fragrancy, I could have persuaded myself, I was in the wardrobe of Hecuba,—

"Where treasured odours breathed a costly scent."

I saw, or seemed to see, the arched apartments, the procession of matrons, the consecrated vestments: the very temple began to rise upon my sight, when a sweltering Dutch porpoise ap-

proaching to make me a low bow, his complaisance proved full as notorious as Satan's, when, according to Catholic legends, he took leave of Luther, that disputatious heresiarch. No spell can resist a fumigation of this nature; away fled palace, Hecuba, matrons, temple, &c. I looked up, and lo! I was in a garret. As poetry is but too often connected with this lofty situation, you will not wonder much at my flight. Being a little recovered from it, I tottered down the staircase, entered the cabinets of natural history, and was soon restored to my sober senses. A grave hippopotamus contributed a good deal to their re-establishment.

The butterflies, I must needs confess, were very near leading me another dance: I thought of their native hills and beloved flowers, on the summits of Haynang and Nan-Hoa;* but the jargon which was gabbling all around me prevented the excursion, and I summoned a decent share of attention for that ample chamber which has been appropriated to bottled snakes and pickled fœtuses.

After having enjoyed the same spectacle in the British Museum, no very new or singular objects

* Hills in the neighbourhood of Canton.

can be selected in this. One of the rarest articles it contains is the representation in wax of a human head, most dexterously flayed indeed! Rapturous encomiums have been bestowed by amateurs on this performance. A German professor could hardly believe it artificial; and, prompted by the love of truth, set his teeth in this delicious morsel to be convinced of its reality. My faith was less hazardously established; and I moved off, under the conviction that art had never produced anything more horridly natural.

It was one o'clock before I got through the mineral kingdom; and another hour passed before I could quit with decorum the regions of stuffed birds and marine productions. At length my departure was allowable; and I went to dine at Sir Joseph Yorke's, with all nations and languages. Amongst the company were two honourable boobies and their governor, all from Ireland. The youngest, after plying me with a succession of innocent questions, wished to be informed where I proposed spending the carnival. "At Tunis," was my answer. The questioner, not in the least surprised, then asked who was to sing there? To which I replied, "Farinelli."

This settled the business to our mutual satisfaction; so after coffee I strayed to the Great Wood, which, considering that it almost touches the town with its boughs, is wonderfully forest-like. Not a branch being ever permitted to be lopped, the oaks and beeches retain their natural luxuriance. In some places their straight boles rise sixty feet without a bough; in others, they are bent fantastically over the alleys, which turn and wind about just as a painter would desire. I followed them with eagerness and curiosity; sometimes deviating from my path amongst tufts of fern and herbage.

In these cool retreats I could not believe myself near canals and windmills; the Dutch formalities were all forgotten whilst contemplating the broad masses of foliage above, and the wild flowers and grasses below. Hares and rabbits scudded by me while I sat; and the birds were chirping their evening song. Their preservation does credit to the police of the country, which is so exact and well regulated as to suffer no outrage within the precincts of this extensive wood, the depth and thickness of which might otherwise seem calculated to favour half the sins of a capital.

Relying upon this comfortable security, I lingered unmolested amongst the beeches till late in the evening; then taking the nearest path, I suffered myself, though not without regret, to be conducted out of this fresh sylvan scene to the dusty, pompous parterres of the Greffier Fagel. Every flower that wealth can purchase diffuses its perfume on one side; whilst every stench a canal can exhale poisons the air on the other. These sluggish puddles defy all the power of the United Provinces, and retain the freedom of stinking in spite of any endeavour to conquer their filthiness.

But perhaps I am too bold in my assertion; for I have no authority to mention any attempts to purify these noxious pools. Who knows but their odour is congenial to a Dutch constitution? One should be inclined to this supposition by the numerous banquetting rooms and pleasure houses which hang directly above their surface, and seem calculated on purpose to enjoy them. If frogs were not excluded from the magistrature of their country (and I cannot but think it a little hard that they are), one should not wonder at this choice. Such burgomasters might erect their pavilions in such situations; but, after all, I am

not greatly surprised at the fishyness of their site, since very slight authority would persuade me there was a period when Holland was all water, and the ancestors of the present inhabitants fish. A certain oysterishness of eye and flabbiness of complexion, are almost proofs sufficient of this aquatic descent: and pray tell me for what purpose are such galligaskins as the Dutch burthen themselves with contrived, but to tuck up a flouncing tail, and thus cloak the deformity of a dolphinlike termination?

Having done penance for some time in the damp alleys which line the borders of these lazy waters, I was led through corkscrew sand-walks to a vast flat, sparingly scattered over with vegetation. There was no temptation to puzzle myself in such a labyrinth; so taking advantage of the lateness of the hour, and muttering a few complimentary promises of returning at the first opportunity, I escaped the ennui of this endless scrubbery, and got home, with the determination of being wiser and less curious if ever my stars should bring me again to the Hague.

LETTER IV.

Leave the Hague.—Leyden.—Wood near Haerlem.—Waddling fishermen —Enter the town.—The great fair.—Riot and uproar.—Confusion of tongues.—Mine hostess.

Haerlem, July 1st, 1780.

THE sky was clear and blue when we left the Hague, and we travelled along a shady road for about an hour, when down sunk the carriage into a sand-bed, and we were dragged along so slowly that I fell into a profound repose. How long it lasted is not material; but when I awoke, we were rumbling through Leyden. There is no need to write a syllable in honour of this illustrious city: its praises have already been sung and said by fifty professors, who have declaimed in its university, and smoked in its gardens. Let us get out of it as fast as we can, and breathe the cool air of the wood near Haerlem.

Here we arrived just as day declined: hay was making in the fields, and perfumed the

country far and wide with its reviving fragrance. I promised myself a sentimental saunter in the groves, took up Gesner, and began to have pretty pastoral ideas as I walked forward; but instead of nymphs dispersed over the meadows, I met a gang of waddling fishermen. Letting fall the garlands I had wreathed for the shepherdesses, I jumped into the carriage and was driven off to the town. Every avenue to it swarmed with people, whose bustle and agitation seemed to announce that something extraordinary was going forward. Upon inquiry I found it was the great fair at Haerlem; and before we had advanced much farther, our carriage was surrounded by idlers and gingerbread-eaters of all denominations. Passing the gate, we came to a cluster of little illuminated booths beneath a grove, glittering with toys and looking-glasses. It was not without difficulty that we reached our inn, and then the plague was to procure chambers; at last we were accommodated, and the first moment I could call my own has been dedicated to you.

You will not be surprised at the nonsense I have written, since I tell you the scene of the riot and uproar from whence it bears date. At this very moment the confused murmur of voices

and music stops all regular proceedings: old women and children tattling; apes, bears, and show-boxes under the windows; French rattling, English swearing, outrageous Italians, frisking minstrels; *tambours de basque* at every corner; myself distracted; a confounded squabble of cooks and haranguing German couriers just arrived, their masters following open-mouthed, nothing to eat, the steam of ham and flesh-pots all the while provoking their appetite; squeaking chamber-maids in the galleries above, and mine hostess below, half inclined to receive the golden solicitations of certain beauties for admittance, but positively refusing them the moment some creditable personage appears; eleven o'clock strikes; half the lights in the fair are extinguished; scruples grow faint; and mammon gains the victory.

LETTER V.

Amsterdam.—The road to Utrecht.—Country-houses and gardens.—Neat enclosures.—Comfortable parties.—Ladies and Lapdogs.—Arrival at Utrecht.—Moravian establishment.—The woods.—Shops.—Celestial love.—Musical Sempstresses.—Return to Utrecht.

Utrecht, 2d July, 1780.

Well, thank Heaven! Amsterdam is behind us; how I got thither signifies not one farthing; it was all along a canal, as usual. The weather was hot enough to broil an inhabitant of Bengal; and the odours, exhaling from every quarter, sufficiently powerful to regale the nose of a Hottentot.

Under these pungent circumstances we entered the great city. The Stadt-huys being the only cool place it contained, I repaired thither as fast as the heat permitted, and walked in a lofty marble hall, magnificently coved, till the dinner was ready at the inn. That despatched, we set off for Utrecht. Both sides of the way are lined

with the country-houses and gardens of opulent citizens, as fine as gilt statues and clipped hedges can make them. Their number is quite astonishing: from Amsterdam to Utrecht, full thirty miles, we beheld no other objects than endless avenues and stiff parterres scrawled and flourished in patterns like the embroidery of an old maid's work-bag. Notwithstanding this formal taste, I could not help admiring the neatness and arrangement of every inclosure, enlivened by a profusion of flowers, and decked with arbours, beneath which a vast number of consequential personages were solacing themselves after the heat of the day. Each lusthuys we passed contained some comfortable party dozing over their pipes, or angling in the muddy fish-ponds below. Scarce an avenue but swarmed with female josses; little squat pug-dogs waddling at their sides, the attributes, I suppose, of these fair divinities.

But let us leave them to loiter thus amiably in their Elysian groves, and arrive at Utrecht; which, as nothing very remarkable claimed my attention, I hastily quitted to visit a Moravian establishment at Ziest, in its neighbourhood. The chapel, a large house, late the habitation of Count Zinzendorf, and a range of apartments

filled with the holy fraternity, are totally wrapped in dark groves, overgrown with weeds, amongst which some damsels were straggling, under the immediate protection of their pious brethren.

Traversing the woods, we found ourselves in a large court, built round with brick edifices, the grass-plats in a deplorable way, and one ragged goat, their only inhabitant, on a little expiatory scheme, perhaps, for the failings of the fraternity. I left this poor animal to ruminate in solitude; and followed my guide into a series of shops furnished with gew-gaws and trinkets said to be manufactured by the female part of the society. Much cannot be boasted of their handy-works: I expressed a wish to see some of these industrious fair ones; but, upon receiving no answer, found this was a subject of which there was no discourse.

Consoling myself as well as I was able, I put myself under the guidance of another slovenly disciple, who showed me the chapel, and harangued very pathetically upon celestial love. In my way thither, I caught a glimpse of some pretty sempstresses, warbling melodious hymns as they sat needling and thimbling at their windows above. I had a great inclination to

approach this busy group, but the roll of a brother's eye corrected me.

Reflecting upon my unworthiness, I retired from the consecrated buildings, and was driven back to Utrecht, not a little amused with my expedition. If you are as well disposed to be pleased as I was, I shall esteem myself very lucky, and not repent sending you so hasty a narrative.

LETTER VI.

Arrival at Aix-la-Chapelle.—Glimpse of a dingy grove.—Melancholy saunterers.—Dusseldorf Gallery.—Nocturnal depredators.—Arrival at Cologne.—Shrine of the Three Wise Sovereigns.—Peregrinations of their beatified bones.—Road to Bonn.—Delights of Catholicism.—Azure mountains.—Visionary palaces.

We arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle about ten at night, and saw the mouldering turrets of that once illustrious capital by the help of a candle and lantern. An old woman at the gate asked our names (for not a single soldier appeared); and after traversing a number of superannuated streets without perceiving the least trace of Charlemagne or his Paladins, we procured comfortable though not magnificent apartments, and slept most unheroically sound, till it was time to set forward for Dusseldorf.

July 8th.—As we were driven out of the town, I caught a glimpse of a grove, hemmed in by

dingy buildings, where a few water-drinkers were sauntering along to the sound of some rueful French horns; the wan greenish light admitted through the foliage made them look like unhappy souls condemned to an eternal lounge for having trifled away their existence. It was not with much regret that I left such a party behind; and, after experiencing the vicissitudes of good roads and rumbling pavements, crossed the Rhine and travelled on to Dusseldorf.

Nothing but the famous gallery of paintings could invite strangers to stay a moment within its walls; more crooked streets, more indifferent houses, one seldom meets with; except soldiers, not a living creature moving about them; and at night a complete regiment of bugs "marked me for their own." Thus I lay, at once the seat of war and the conquest of these detestable animals, till early in the morning (Sunday, July 9th), when Morpheus, compassionating my sufferings, opened the ivory gates of his empire, and freed his votary from the most unconscionable vermin ever engendered. In humble prose, I fell fast asleep; and remained quiet, in defiance of my adversaries, 'till it was time to survey the cabinet.

This collection is displayed in five large galleries, and contains some valuable productions of the Italian school; but the room most boasted of is that which Rubens has filled with no less than three enormous representations of the last day, where an innumerable host of sinners are exhibited as striving in vain to avoid the tangles of the devil's tail. The woes of several fat luxurious souls are rendered in the highest gusto. Satan's dispute with some brawny concubines, whom he is lugging off in spite of all their resistance, cannot be too much admired by those who approve this class of subjects, and think such strange embroglios in the least calculated to raise a sublime or a religious idea.

For my own part, I turned from them with disgust, and hastened to contemplate a holy family by Camillo Procaccini, in another apartment. The brightest imagination can never conceive any figure more gráceful than that of the young Jesus; and if ever I beheld an inspired countenance or celestial features, it was here: but to attempt conveying in words what the pencil alone can express, would be only reversing the absurdity of many a master in the gallery who aims to represent those ideas by the pencil

which language alone is able to describe. Should you admit this opinion, you will not be surprised at my passing such a multitude of renowned pictures unnoticed; nor at my bringing you out of the cabinet without deluging ten pages with criticisms in the style of the ingenious Lady Miller.

As I had spent so much time in the gallery, the day was too far advanced to think of travelling to Cologne; I was therefore obliged to put myself once more under the dominion of the most inveterate bugs in the universe. This government, like many others, made but an indifferent use of its power, and the subject suffering accordingly was extremely rejoiced at flying from his persecutors to Cologne.

July 10th.—Clouds of dust hindered my making any remarks on the exterior of this celebrated city; but if its appearance be not more beautiful from without than within, I defy the most courteous compiler of geographical dictionaries to launch forth very warmly in its praise. But of what avail are stately palaces, broad streets, or airy markets, to a town which can boast of such a treasure as the bodies of those three wise sovereigns who were star-led to

Bethlehem? Is not this circumstance enough to procure it every kind of respect? I really believe so, from the pious and dignified contentment of its inhabitants. They care not a hair of an ass's ear whether their houses be gloomy and ill-contrived, their pavements overgrown with weeds, and their shops half choked up with filthiness, provided the carcasses of Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar might be preserved with proper decorum. Nothing, to be sure, can be richer than the shrine which contains these precious relics. I paid my devotions before it the moment I arrived; this step was inevitable: had I omitted it, not a soul in Cologne but would have cursed me for a Pagan.

Do you not wonder at hearing of these venerable bodies so far from their native country? I thought them snug under some Arabian cupola ten feet deep in spice; but who can tell what is to become of one a few ages hence? Who knows but the Emperor of Morocco may be canonized some future day in Lapland? I asked, of course, how in the name of miracles they came hither? but found no story of a supernatural conveyance. It seems that great collectress of relics, the holy Empress Helena, first routed them out: then

they were packed off to Rome. King Alaric, having no grace, bundled them down to Milan; where they remained till it pleased Heaven to inspire an ancient archbishop with the fervent wish of depositing them at Cologne; there these skeletons were taken into the most especial consideration, crowned with jewels and filigreed with gold. Never were skulls more elegantly mounted; and I doubt whether Odin's buffet could exhibit so fine an assortment. The chapel containing these beatified bones is placed in a dark extremity of the cathedral. Several golden lamps gleam along the polished marbles with which it is adorned, and afford just light enough to read the following monkish inscription:

"CORPORA SANCTORUM RECUBANT HIC TERNA MAGORUM:
EX HIS SUBLATUM NIHIL EST ALIBIVE LOCATUM."

After I had satisfied my curiosity with respect to the peregrinations of the consecrated skeletons, I examined their shrine; and was rather surprised to find it not only enriched with barbaric gold and pearl, but covered with cameos and intaglios of the best antique sculpture. Many an impious emperor and gross Silenus, many a wanton nymph and frantic bacchanal, figure in the same range with the statues of

saints and evangelists. How St. Helena could tolerate such a mixed assembly (for the shrine, they say, was formed under her auspices) surpasses my comprehension. Perhaps you will say, it is no great matter; and give me a hint to move out of the chapel, lest the three kings and their star should lead me quite out of my way. Very well; I think I had better stop in time, to tell you, without further excursion, that we set off after dinner for Bonn.

Our road-side was lined with beggarly children, high convent walls, and scarecrow crucifixes, lubberly monks, dejected peasants, and all the delights of Catholicism. Such scenery not engaging a share of my attention, I kept gazing at the azure irregular mountains which bounded our view, and in thought was already transported to their summits. Vast and wild were the prospects I surveyed from my imaginary exaltation, and innumerable the chimeras which trotted in my brain. Under their capricious influence my fancy built castles and capitols in the clouds with all the extravaganza of Piranesi. The magnificence and variety of my aërial structures hindered my thinking the way long. I was walking with a crowd of phantoms upon

their terraces, when the carriage made a halt. Immediately descending the innumerable flights of steps which divide such lofty edifices from the lower world, I entered the inn at Bonn, and was shown into an apartment which commands the chief front of the Elector's residence. You may guess how contemptible it appeared to one just returned from palaces bedecked with all the pomp of visionary splendour. In other respects I saw it at a very favourable moment, for the twilight, shading the whole façade, concealed its plastered walls and painted columns.

LETTER VII.

Borders of the Rhine.—Richly picturesque road from Bonn to Andernach.—Scheme for a floating village.—Coblentz. —A winding valley.—The river Lahn.—Ems.—The planet Orloff and his satellites.—A supposed Apparition.—A little sequestered Paradise.

July 11, 1780.

Let those who delight in picturesque country repair to the borders of the Rhine, and follow the road from Bonn to Coblentz. In some places it is suspended like a cornice above the waters; in others, it winds behind lofty steeps and broken acclivities, shaded by woods and clothed with an endless variety of plants and flowers. Several green paths lead amongst this vegetation to the summits of the rocks, which often serve as the foundation of abbeys and castles, whose lofty roofs and spires, rising above the cliffs, impress passengers with ideas of their

grandeur, that might probably vanish upon a nearer approach. Not choosing to lose any prejudice in their favour, I kept a respectful distance whenever I left my carriage, and walked on the banks of the river.

Just before we came to Andernach, an antiquated town with strange morisco-looking towers, I spied a raft, at least three hundred feet in length, on which ten or twelve cottages were erected, and a great many people employed in sawing wood The women sat spinning at their doors, whilst their children played among the water-lilies that bloomed in abundance on the edge of the stream. A smoke, rising from one of these aquatic habitations, partially obscured the mountains beyond, and added not a little to their effect

Altogether, the scene was so novel and amusing, that I sat half an hour contemplating it from an eminence under the shade of some leafy walnuts; and should like extremely to build a moveable village, people it with my friends, and so go floating about from island to island, and from one woody coast of the Rhine to another. Would you dislike such a party?

I am much deceived, or you would be the first to explore the shady promontories beneath which we should be wafted along.

But I do not think you would find Coblentz, where we were obliged to take up our night's lodging, much to your taste. It is a mean, dirty assemblage of plastered houses, striped with paint, and set off with wooden galleries, in the delectable taste of old St. Giles's. Above, on a rock, stands the palace of the Elector, which seems to be remarkable for nothing except situation. I did not bestow many looks on this structure whilst ascending the mountain across which our road to Mayence conducted us.

July 12. Having attained the summit, we discovered a vast, irregular range of country, and advancing, found ourselves amongst downs purpled with thyme and bounded by forests. This sort of prospect extending for several leagues, I walked on the turf, and inhaled with avidity the fresh gales that blew over its herbage, till I came to a steep slope overgrown with privet and a variety of luxuriant shrubs in blossom. A cloudless sky and bright sunshine made

me rather loth to move on; but the charms of the landscape, increasing every instant, drew me forward.

I had not gone far, before a winding valley discovered itself, inclosed by rocks and mountains clothed to their very summits with the thickest woods. A broad river, flowing at the base of the cliffs, reflected the impending vegetation, and looked so calm and glassy that I was determined to be better acquainted with it. For this purpose we descended by a zigzag path into the vale, and making the best of our way on the banks of the Lahn (for so is the river called) came suddenly upon the town of Ems, famous in mineral story; where, finding very good lodgings, we took up our abode, and led an Indian life amongst the wilds and mountains.

After supper I walked on a smooth lawn by the river, to observe the moon journeying through a world of silver clouds that lay dispersed over the face of the heavens. It was a mild genial evening; every mountain cast its broad shadow on the surface of the stream; lights twinkled afar off on the hills; they burnt

in silence. All were asleep, except a female figure in white, with glow-worms shining in her hair. She kept moving disconsolately about: sometimes I heard her sigh; and if apparitions sigh, this must have been an apparition.

July 13.—The pure air of the morning invited me abroad at an early hour. Hiring a skiff, I rowed about a mile down the stream, and landed on a sloping meadow, level with the waters, and newly mown. Heaps of hay still lay dispersed under the copses which hemmed in on every side this little sequestered paradise. What a spot for a tent! I could encamp here for months, and never be tired. Not a day would pass by without discovering some untrodden pasture, some unsuspected vale, where I might remain among woods and precipices lost and forgotten. I would give you, and two or three more, the clue of my labyrinth: nobody else should be conscious even of its entrance. Full of such agreeable dreams, I rambled about the meads, scarcely aware which way I was going; sometimes a spangled fly led me astray, and, oftener, my own strange fancies. Between both, I was perfectly bewildered, and should never

have found my boat again, had not an old German naturalist, who was collecting fossils on the cliffs, directed me to it.

When I got home it was growing late, and I now began to perceive that I had taken no refreshment, except the perfume of the hay and a few wood strawberries ; airy diet, you will observe, for one not yet received into the realms of Ginnistan.

LETTER VIII.

Inveterate Idlers.—The planet Orloff and his satellites.—A Storm.—Scared women.—A dreary Forest.—Village of Wiesbaden.—Manheim.—Ulm.—The Danube—unlimited plains on its margin.—Augsburg.—Sketch of the Town.—Pomposities of the Town House.

Ems, July 14.

I HAVE just made a discovery, that this place is as full of idlers and water-drinkers as their Highnesses of Orange and Hesse Darmstadt can desire; for to them accrue all the profits of its salubrious fountains. I protest, I knew nothing of all this yesterday, so entirely was I taken up with the rocks and meadows; and conceived no chance of meeting either card or billiard players in their solitudes. Both however abound at Ems, unconscious of the bold scenery in their neighbourhood, and totally insensible to its charms. They had no notion, not they, of admiring barren crags and precipices, where even

the Lord would lose his way, as a clumsy lubber decorated with stars and orders very ingeniously observed to me; nor could they form the least conception of any pleasure there was in climbing like a goat amongst the cliffs, and then diving into woods and recesses where the sun had never penetrated; where there were neither card-tables prepared nor sideboards garnished; no *jambon de Mayence* in waiting; no supply of pipes, nor any of the commonest delights, to be met with in the commonest taverns.

To all this I acquiesced with most perfect submission, but immediately left the orator to entertain a circle of antiquated dames and weather-beaten officers who were gathering around him. Scarcely had I turned my back upon this polite assembly, when *Monsieur l'Administrateur des bains*, a fine pompous fellow, who had been *maitre d'hôtel* in a great German family, came forward purposely to acquaint me, I suppose, that their baths had the honour of possessing Prince Orloff, "*avec sa crande maidresse, son shamperlan, et guelgues tames donneur:*" moreover, that his Highness came hither to refresh himself after his laborious employments at the Court of St. Petersburgh, and expected (*grace aux*

eaux!) to return to the domains his august sovereign had lately bestowed upon him, perfectly regenerated.

Wishing Monsieur d'Orloff all possible success, I should have left the company at a greater distance, had not a violent shower stopped my career, and obliged me to return to my apartment. The rain growing heavier, intercepted the prospect of the mountains, and spread such a gloom over the vale as sank my spirits fifty degrees; to which a close foggy atmosphere not a little contributed. Towards night the clouds assumed a more formidable aspect; thunder rolled along the distant cliffs, and torrents began to run down the steeps. At intervals a blue flash of lightning discovered the agitated surface of the stream, and two or three scared women rushing through the storm, and calling all the saints in Paradise to their assistance.

Things were in this state, when the orator who had harangued so brilliantly on the folly of ascending mountains, bounced into the room, and regaled my ears with a woeful narration of murders which had happened the other day on the precise road I was to follow the next morning.

"Sir," said he, "your route is, to be sure, very perilous: on the left you have a chasm, down which, should your horses take the smallest alarm, you are infallibly precipitated; to the right hangs an impervious wood, and there, sir, I can assure you, are wolves enough to devour a regiment; a little farther on, you cross a desolate tract of forest land, the roads so deep and broken, that if you go ten paces in as many minutes you may think yourself fortunate. There lurk the most savage banditti in Europe, lately irritated by the Prince of Orange's proscription; and so desperate, that if they make an attack, you can expect no mercy. Should you venture through this hazardous district to-morrow, you will, in all probability, meet a company of people who have just left the town to search for the mangled bodies of their relations; but, for Heaven's sake, sir, if you value your life, do not suffer an idle curiosity to lead you over such dangerous regions, however picturesque their appearance."

It was almost nine o'clock before my kind adviser ceased inspiring me with terrors; then, finding myself at liberty, I retired to bed, not under the most agreeable impressions.

Early in the morning we set forward; and proceeding along the edge of the precipices I had been forewarned of, journeyed through the forest which had so recently been the scene of murders and depredations. At length, after winding several hours amongst its dreary avenues, we emerged into open daylight. A few minutes more brought us safe to the village of Wiesbaden, where we slept in peace and tranquillity.

July 10.—Our apprehensions being entirely dispersed, we rose much refreshed: and passing through Mayence, Oppenheim, and Worms, travelled gaily over the plain in which Manheim is situated. The sun set before we arrived there.

Numbers of well-dressed people were amusing themselves with music and fireworks in the squares and open spaces; other groups appeared conversing in circles before their doors, and enjoying the serenity of the evening. Almost every window bloomed with carnations; and we could hardly cross a street without hearing the sound of music. A scene of such happiness and refinement formed a most agreeable contrast to the dismalities we had left behind. All

around was security and contentment in their most engaging attire.

July 20.—After travelling a post or two, we came in sight of a green moor, of vast extent, with insulated woods and villages; here and there the Danube sweeping majestically along, and the city of Ulm rising upon its banks. The fields in the neighbourhood of the town were overspread with cloths bleaching in the sun, and waiting for barks, which convey them down the great river in twelve days to Vienna, and thence, through Hungary, into the midst of the Turkish empire.

You never saw a brighter sky nor more glowing clouds than those which gilded our horizon. For ten miles we beheld no other objects than smooth unlimited levels interspersed with thickets of oak, beyond which appeared a long series of mountains. Such were the very spots for youthful games and exercises, open spaces for the race, and spreading shades to skreen the spectators.

Father Lafiteau tells us, there are many such vast and flowery Savannahs in the interior of America, to which the roving tribes of Indians

repair once or twice in a century to settle the rights of the chase, and lead their solemn dances; and so deep an impression do these assemblies leave on the minds of the savages, that the highest ideas they entertain of future felicity consist in the perpetual enjoyment of songs and dances upon the green boundless lawns of their elysium. In the midst of these visionary plains rises the abode of Ateantsic, encircled by choirs of departed chieftains leaping in cadence to the sound of spears as they ring on the shell of the tortoise. Their favourite attendants, long separated from them while on earth, are restored again in this ethereal region, and skim freely over the vast level space; now, hailing one group of beloved friends; and now, another. Mortals newly ushered by death into this world of pure blue sky and boundless meads, see the long-lost objects of their affection advancing to meet them, whilst flights of familiar birds, the purveyors of many an earthly chase, once more attend their progress, and the shades of their faithful dogs seem coursing each other below. The whole region is filled with low murmurs and tinkling sounds, which increase in melody as its

new denizens proceed, who, at length, unable to resist the thrilling music, spring forward in ecstasies to join the eternal round.

A share of this celestial transport seemed communicated to me whilst my eyes wandered over the plains, which imagination widened and extended in proportion as the twilight prevailed, and so fully abandoned was I to the illusion of the moment, that I did not for several minutes perceive our arrival at Günzburg; whence we proceeded the next morning (July 21) to Augsburg, and rambled about this renowned city till evening. The colossal paintings on the walls of almost every considerable building gave it a strange air, which pleases upon the score of novelty.

Having passed a number of streets decorated in this exotic manner, we found ourselves suddenly before the public hall, by a noble statue of Augustus; which way soever we turned, our eyes met some remarkable edifice, or marble basin into which several groups of sculptured river-gods pour a profusion of waters. These stately fountains and bronze statues, the extraordinary size and loftiness of the buildings, the towers rising in perspective, and the Doric portal of the town-house, answered in some mea-

sure the idea Montfaucon gives us of the scene of an ancient tragedy. Whenever a pompous Flemish painter attempts a representation of Troy or Babylon, and displays in his back-ground those streets of palaces described in the Iliad, Augsburg, or some such city, may easily be traced. Frequently a corner of Antwerp discovers itself; and sometimes, above a Corinthian portico, rises a Gothic spire: just such a jumble may be viewed from the statue of Augustus, under which I remained till the concierge came, who was to open the gates of the town-house and show me its magnificent hall.

I wished for you exceedingly when ascending a flight of a hundred steps; I entered it through a portal, supported by tall pillars and crowned with a majestic pediment. Upon advancing, I discovered five more entrances equally grand, with golden figures of guardian genii leaning over the entablature; and saw, through a range of windows, each above thirty feet high, and nearly level with the marble pavement, the whole city, with all its roofs and spires, beneath my feet. The pillars, cornices, and panels of this striking apartment are uniformly tinged with brown and gold; and the ceiling, enriched with emblema-

tical paintings and innumerable canopies and pendents of carved work, casts a very magisterial shade. Upon the whole, I should not be surprised at a burgomaster assuming a formidable dignity in such a room.

I must confess it had a somewhat similar effect upon me; and I descended the flight of steps with as much pomposity as if on the point of giving audience to the Queen of Sheba. It happened to be a high festival, and half the inhabitants of Augsburg were gathered together in the opening before their hall; the greatest numbers, especially the women, still exhibiting the very dresses which Hollar engraved. My lofty gait imposed upon this primitive assembly, which receded to give me passage with as much silent respect as if I had really been the wise sovereign of Israel. When I got home, an execrable sourcroutish supper was served up to my majesty; I scolded in an unroyal style, and soon convinced myself I was no longer Solomon.

LETTER IX.

Extensive woods of fir in Bavaria.—Grand Fair at Munich.—The Elector's country palace.—Court Ladies.—Fountains.—Costume.—Garden and tea-room.—Hoydening festivities there.—The Palace and Chapel.—Gorgeous riches of the latter.—St. Peter's thumb.—The Elector's collection of pictures.—The Churches.—Hubbub and confusion of the Fair.—Wild tract of country.—Village of Wolfrathshausen.—Perpetual forests.—A Tempest.—A night at a cottage.

July 22.

JOY to the Electors of Bavaria! for preserving such extensive woods of fir in their dominions as shade over the chief part of the road from Augsburg to Munich. Near the last-mentioned city, I cannot boast of the scenery changing to advantage. Instead of flourishing woods and verdure, we beheld a parched dreary flat, diversified by fields of withering barley, and stunted avenues drawn formally across them; now and then a stagnant pool, and sometimes a dunghill, by way of regale. However, the wild rocks of

the Tyrol terminate the view, and to them imagination may fly, and ramble amidst springs and lilies of her own creation. I speak from authority, having had the delight of anticipating an evening in this romantic style.

Tuesday next is the grand fair at Munich, with horse-races and junketings: a piece of news I was but too soon acquainted with; for the moment we entered the town, good-natured creatures from all quarters advised us to get out of it; since traders and harlequins had filled every corner of the place, and there was not a lodging to be procured. The inns, to be sure, were hives of industrious animals sorting their merchandise, and preparing their goods for sale. Yet, in spite of difficulties, we got possession of a quiet apartment.

July 23.—We were driven in the evening to Nymphenburg, the Elector's country palace, the bosquets, jets d'eaux, and parterres of which are the pride of the Bavarians. The principal platform is all of a glitter with gilded Cupids and shining serpents spouting at every pore. Beds of poppies, hollyhocks, scarlet lychnis, and other flame-coloured flowers, border the edge of the walks, which extend till the perspective appears

to meet, and swarm with ladies and gentlemen in party-coloured raiment. The queen of Golconda's gardens in a French opera are scarcely more gaudy and artificial. Unluckily too, the evening was fine, and the sun so powerful that we were half roasted before we could cross the great avenue and enter the thickets, which barely conceal a very splendid hermitage, where we joined Mr. and Mrs. Trevor, and a party of fashionable Bavarians.

Amongst the ladies was Madame la Comtesse, I forget who, a production of the venerable Haslang, with her daughter, Madame de Baumgarten, who has the honour of leading the Elector in her chains. These goddesses stepping into a car, vulgarly called a cariole, the mortals followed and explored alley after alley and pavilion after pavilion. Then, having viewed Pagodenburg, which is, as they told me, all Chinese; and Marienburg, which is most assuredly all tinsel; we paraded by a variety of fountains in full squirt, and though they certainly did their best (for many were set agoing on purpose) I cannot say I greatly admired them.

The ladies were very gaily attired, and the gentlemen, as smart as swords, bags, and pretty

clothes could make them, looked exactly like the fine people one sees represented on Dresden porcelain. Thus we kept walking genteelly about the orangery, till the carriage drew up and conveyed us to Mr. Trevor's.

Immediately after supper, we drove once more out of town, to a garden and tea-room, where all degrees and ages dance jovially together till morning. Whilst one party wheel briskly away in the waltz, another amuse themselves in a corner with cold meat and rhenish. That despatched, out they whisk amongst the dancers, with an impetuosity and liveliness I little expected to have found in Bavaria. After turning round and round, with a rapidity that is quite astounding to an English dancer, the music changes to a slower movement, and then follows a succession of zig-zag minuets, performed by old and young, straight and crooked, noble and plebeian, all at once, from one end of the room to the other. Tallow candles snuffing and stinking, dishes changing at the risk of showering down upon you their savoury contents, heads scratching, and all sorts of performances going forward at the same moment; the flutes, oboes, and bassoons, snorting, grunting and whining

with peculiar emphasis; now fast, now slow, just as Variety commands, who seems to rule the ceremonial of this motley assembly, where every distinction of rank and privilege is totally forgotten. Once a week, on Sundays that is to say, the rooms are open, and Monday is generally far advanced before they are deserted. If good humour and coarse merriment are all that people desire, here they are to be found in perfection.

July 24.—Custom condemned us to visit the palace, which glares with looking-glass, gilding, and furbelowed flounces of cut velvet, most sumptuously fringed and spangled. The chapel, though small, is richer than anything Crœsus ever possessed, let them say what they will. Not a corner but shines with gold, diamonds, and scraps of martyrdom studded with jewels. I had the delight of treading amethysts and the richest gems under foot, which, if you recollect, Apuleius* thinks such supreme felicity. Alas! I was quite unworthy of the honour, and had much rather have trodden the turf of the mountains. Mammon would never have taken his eyes off the pavement; mine soon left the con-

* Apuleius Met. Lib. 5.
Vehementer iterum ac sæpius beatos illos qui
Super gemmas et monilia calcant!

templation of it and fixed on St. Peter's thumb, enshrined with a degree of elegance, and adorned by some malapert enthusiast with several of the most delicate antique cameos I ever beheld; the subjects, Ledas and sleeping Venuses, are a little too pagan, one should think, for an apostle's finger.

From this precious repository we were conducted through the public garden to a large hall, where part of the Elector's collection is piled up, till a gallery can be finished for its reception. It was matter of great favour to view, in this state, the pieces that compose it, a very imperfect one too, since some of the best were under operation. But I would not upon any account have missed the sight of Rubens's Massacre of the Innocents. Such expressive horrors were never yet transferred to canvass. Moloch himself might have gazed at them with pleasure.

After dinner we were led round the churches; and if you are as much tired with reading my voluminous descriptions, as I was with the continual repetition of altars and reliquaries, the Lord have mercy upon you! However, your delivery draws near. The post is going out, and to-morrow we shall begin to mount the cliffs

of the Tyrol; but, do not be afraid of any long-winded epistles from their summits: I shall be too well employed in ascending them.

July 25.—The noise of the people thronging to the fair did not allow me to slumber very long in the morning. When I got up, every street was crowded with Jews and mountebanks, holding forth and driving their bargains in all the guttural hoarseness of the Bavarian dialect. Vast quantities of rich merchandise glittered in the shops as we passed to the gates. Heaps of fruit and sweetmeats set half the grandams and infants in the place cackling with felicity.

Mighty glad was I to make my escape; and in about an hour or two, we entered a wild tract of country, not unlike the skirts of a princely park. A little farther on stands a cluster of cottages, where we stopped to give our horses some refreshment, and were pestered with swarms of flies, most probably journeying to Munich fair, there to feast upon sugared tarts and honied gingerbread.

The next post brought us over hill and dale, grove and meadow, to a narrow plain, watered by rivulets and surrounded by cliffs, under which lies scattered the village of Wolfrathshausen, con-

sisting of several remarkably large cottages, built entirely of fir, with strange galleries projecting from them. Nothing can be neater than the carpentry of these complicated edifices, nor more solid than their construction; many of them looked as if they had braved the torrents which fell from the mountains a century ago; and, if one may judge from the hoary appearance of the inhabitants, here are patriarchs coeval with their mansions. Orchards of cherry-trees cover the steeps above the village, which to our certain knowledge produce most admirable fruit.

Having refreshed ourselves with their cooling juice, we struck into a grove of pines, the tallest and most flourishing we had yet beheld. There seemed no end to these forests, except where little irregular spots of herbage, fed by cattle, intervened. Whenever we gained an eminence it was only to discover more ranges of dark-wood, variegated with meadows and glittering streams. White clover and a profusion of sweet-scented flowers clothe their banks; above, waves the mountain-ash, glowing with scarlet berries: and beyond, rise hills, rocks and mountains, piled upon one another, and fringed with fir to their topmost acclivities. Perhaps

the Norwegian forests alone, equal these in grandeur and extent. Those which cover the Swiss highlands rarely convey such vast ideas. There, the woods climb only half way up their ascents, which then are circumscribed by snows: here no boundaries are set to their progress, and the mountains, from base to summit, display rich unbroken masses of vegetation.

As we were surveying this prospect, a thick cloud, fraught with thunder, obscured the horizon, whilst flashes of lightning startled our horses, whose snorts and stampings resounded through the woods. The impending tempests gave additional gloom to the firs, and we travelled several miles almost in total darkness. One moment the clouds began to fleet, and a faint gleam promised serener intervals, but the next was all blackness and terror; presently a deluge of rain poured down upon the valley, and in a short time, the torrents beginning to swell, raged with such violence as to be forded with difficulty. Twilight drew on, just as we had passed the most terrible; then ascending a mountain, whose pines and birches rustled with the storm, we saw a little lake below. A deep azure haze veiled its eastern shore, and lowering vapours concealed the cliffs

to the south; but over its western extremities hung a few transparent clouds; the rays of a struggling sunset streamed on the surface of the waters, tingeing the brow of a green promontory with tender pink.

I could not help fixing myself on the banks of the lake for several minutes, till this apparition faded away. Looking round, I shuddered at a craggy mountain, clothed with forests and almost perpendicular, that was absolutely to be surmounted before we could arrive at Walchen-see. No house, not even a shed appearing, we were forced to ascend the peak, and penetrate these awful groves. At length, after some perils but no adventure, we saw lights gleam upon the shore of the Walchen lake, which served to direct us to a cottage, where we passed the night, and were soon lulled to sleep by the fall of distant waters.

LETTER X.

Mittenwald. — Mountain chapels. — Saint Anna's young and fair worshippers.—Road to Inspruck.—Maximilian's tomb.—Vast range of prospects.—A mountain torrent.—Schönberg.

July 26.

THE sun rose many hours before me, and when I got up was spangling the surface of the lake, which spreads itself between steeps of wood, crowned by lofty crags and pinnacles. We had an opportunity of contemplating this bold assemblage as we travelled on the banks of the lake, where it forms a bay sheltered by impending forests; the water, tinged by their reflection with a deep cerulean, calm and tranquil. Mountains of pine and beech rising above, close every outlet; and, no village or spire peeping out of the foliage, impress an idea of more than European solitude.

From the shore of Walchen-see, our road led us straight through arching groves, which the axe seems never to have violated, to the summit of a rock covered with daphnes of various species, and worn by the course of torrents into innumerable craggy forms. Beneath, lay extended a chaos of shattered cliffs, with tall pines springing from their crevices, and rapid streams hurrying between their intermingled trunks and branches. As yet, no hut appeared, no mill, no bridge, no trace of human existence.

After a few hours' journey through the wilderness, we began to discover a wreath of smoke; and presently the cottage from whence it arose, composed of planks, and reared on the very brink of a precipice. Piles of cloven fir were dispersed before the entrance, on a little spot of verdure browsed by goats; near them sat an aged man with hoary whiskers, his white locks tucked under a fur cap. Two or three beautiful children with hair neatly braided, played around him, and a young woman dressed in a short robe and Polish-looking bonnet, peeped out of a wicket window.

I was so much struck with the appearance of this sequestered family, that, crossing a rivulet,

I clambered up to their cottage and sought some refreshment. Immediately there was a contention amongst the children, who should be the first to oblige me. A little black-eyed girl succeeded, and brought me an earthen jug full of milk, with crumbled bread and a platter of strawberries, fresh picked from the bank. I reclined in the midst of my smiling hosts, and spread my repast on the turf: never could I be waited upon with more hospitable grace. The only thing I wanted was language to express my gratitude; and it was this deficiency which made me quit them so soon. The old man seemed visibly concerned at my departure; and his children followed me a long way down the rocks, talking in a dialect which passes all understanding, and waving their hands to bid me adieu.

I had hardly lost sight of them and regained my carriage before we entered a forest of pines, to all appearance without bounds, of every age and figure; some, feathered to the ground with flourishing branches; others, decayed into shapes like Lapland idols. Even at noonday, I thought we should never have found our way out.

At last, having descended a long avenue, end-

less perspectives opening on either side, we emerged into a valley bounded by hills, divided into irregular inclosures, where many herds were grazing. A rivulet flows along the pastures beneath; and after winding through the village of Walgau, loses itself in a narrow pass amongst the cliffs and precipices which rise above the cultivated slopes and frame in this happy pastoral region. All the plain was in sunshine, the sky blue, the heights illuminated, except one rugged peak with spires of rock, shaped not unlike the views I have seen of Sinai, and wrapped, like that sacred mount, in clouds and darkness. At the base of this tremendous mass lies the hamlet of Mittenwald, surrounded by thickets and banks of verdure, and watered by frequent springs, whose sight and murmurs were so reviving in the midst of a sultry day, that we could not think of leaving their vicinity, but remained at Mittenwald the whole evening.

Our inn had long airy galleries, with pleasant balconies fronting the mountain; in one of these we dined, upon trout fresh from the rills, and cherries just culled from the orchards that cover the slopes above. The clouds were dispersing, and the topmost peak half visible, before we

ended our repast, every moment discovering some inaccessible cliff or summit, shining through the mists, and tinted by the sun, with pale golden colours. These appearances filled me with such delight and with such a train of romantic associations, that I left the table and ran to an open field beyond the huts and gardens to gaze in solitude and catch the vision before it dissolved away. You, if any human being is able, may conceive true ideas of the glowing vapours sailing over the pointed rocks, and brightening them in their passage with amber light.

When all was faded and lost in the blue ether, I had time to look around me and notice the mead in which I was standing. Here, clover covered its surface; there, crops of grain; further on, beds of herbs and the sweetest flowers. An amphitheatre of hills and rocks, broken into a variety of glens and precipices, open a course for several clear rivulets, which, after gurgling amidst loose stones and fragments, fall down the steeps, and are concealed and quieted in the herbage of the vale.

A cottage or two peep out of the woods that hang over the waterfalls; and on the brow of

the hills above, appears a series of eleven little chapels, uniformly built. I followed the narrow path that leads to them, on the edge of the eminences, and met a troop of beautiful peasants, all of the name of Anna (for it was St. Anna's day) going to pay their devotion, severally, at these neat white fanes. There were faces that Guercino would not have disdained copying, with braids of hair the softest and most luxuriant I ever beheld. Some had wreathed it simply with flowers, others with rolls of a thin linen (manufactured in the neighbourhood), and disposed it with a degree of elegance one should not have expected on the cliffs of the Tyrol.

Being arrived, they knelt all together at the first chapel, on the steps, a minute or two, whispered a short prayer, and then dispersed each to her fane. Every little building had now its fair worshipper, and you may well conceive how much such figures, scattered about the landscape, increased its charms. Notwithstanding the fervour of their adorations (for at intervals they sighed, and beat their white bosoms with energy), several bewitching profane glances were cast at me as I passed by. Do not be surprised, then, if I became a convert to idolatry in

so amiable a form, and worshipped Saint Anna on the score of her namesakes.

When got beyond the last chapel, I began to hear the roar of a cascade in a thick wood of beech and chestnut that clothes the steeps of a wide fissure in the rock. My ear soon guided me to its entrance, which was marked by a shed encompassed with mossy fragments and almost concealed by bushes of rhododendron in full red bloom—amongst these I struggled, till reaching a goat-track, it conducted me, on the brink of the foaming waters, to the very depths of the cliff, whence issues a stream which, dashing impetuously down, strikes against a ledge of rocks, and sprinkles the impending thicket with dew. Big drops hung on every spray, and glittered on the leaves partially gilt by the rays of the declining sun, whose mellow hues softened the rugged summits, and diffused a repose, a divine calm, over this deep retirement, which inclined me to imagine it the extremity of the earth—the portal of some other region of existence,—some happy world beyond the dark groves of pine, the caves and awful mountains, where the river takes its source! Impressed with this romantic idea, I hung eagerly over the gulph, and fancied I could

distinguish a voice bubbling up with the waters; then looked into the abyss and strained my eyes to penetrate its gloom—but all was dark and unfathomable as futurity! Awakening from my reverie, I felt the damps of the water chill my forehead; and ran shivering out of the vale to avoid them. A warmer atmosphere, that reigned in the meads I had wandered across before, tempted me to remain a good while longer collecting dianthi freaked with beautifully varied colours, and a species of white thyme scented like myrrh. Whilst I was thus employed, a confused murmur struck my ear, and, on turning towards a cliff, backed by the woods from whence the sound seemed to proceed, forth issued a herd of goats, hundreds after hundreds, skipping down the steeps: then followed two shepherd boys, gamboling together as they drove their creatures along: soon after, the dog made his appearance, hunting a stray heifer which brought up the rear. I followed them with my eyes till lost in the windings of the valley, and heard the tinkling of their bells die gradually away. Now the last blush of crimson left the summit of *Sinai*, inferior mountains being long since cast in deep blue shade. The village was

already hushed when I regained it, and in a few moments I followed its example.

July 27.—We pursued our journey to Inspruck, through the wildest scenes of wood and mountain, where the rocks were now beginning to assume a loftier and more majestic appearance, and to glisten with snows. I had proposed passing a day or two at Inspruck, visiting the castle of Embras, and examining Count Eysenberg's cabinet, enriched with the rarest productions of the mineral kingdom, and a complete collection of the moths and flies peculiar to the Tyrol; but, upon my arrival, the azure of the skies and the brightness of the sunshine inspired me with an irresistible wish of hastening to Italy. I was now too near the object of my journey, to delay possession any longer than absolutely necessary, so, casting a transient look on Maximilian's tomb, and the bronze statues of Tyrolese Counts, and worthies, solemnly ranged in the church of the Franciscans, set off immediately.

We crossed a broad noble street, terminated by a triumphal arch, and were driven along the road to the foot of a mountain waving with fields of corn, and variegated with wood and

vineyards, encircling lawns of the finest verdure, scattered over with white houses. Upon ascending the mount, and beholding a vast range of prospects of a similar character, I almost repented my impatience, and looked down with regret upon the cupolas and steeples we were leaving behind. But the rapid succession of lovely and romantic scenes soon effaced the former from my memory.

Our road, the smoothest in the world (though hewn in the bosom of rocks) by its sudden turns and windings, gave us, every instant, opportunities of discovering new villages, and forests rising beyond forests, green spots in the midst of wood, high above on the mountains, and cottages perched on the edge of promontories. Down, far below, in the chasm, amidst a confusion of pines and fragments of stone, rages the torrent Inn, which fills the country far and wide with a perpetual murmur. Sometimes we descended to its brink, and crossed over high bridges; sometimes mounted halfway up the cliffs, till its roar and agitation became, through distance, inconsiderable.

After a long ascent we reached Schönberg,* a

* Schönberg, beautiful mountain.

village well worthy of its appellation : and then, twilight drawing over us, began to descend. We could now but faintly discover the opposite mountains, veined with silver rills, when we came once more to the banks of the Inn. This turbulent stream accompanied us all the way to Steinach, and broke by its continual roar the stillness of the night, half spent, before we retired to rest.

LETTER XI.

Steinach.—Its torrent and gloomy strait.—Achievements of Industry.—A sleepy Region.—Beautiful country round Brixen.

July 28.

I ROSE early to enjoy the fragrance of the vegetation, bathed in a shower which had lately fallen, and looking around me, saw nothing but crags hanging over crags, and the rocky shores of the stream, still dark with the shade of the mountains. The small opening in which Steinach is situated, terminates in a gloomy strait, scarce leaving room for the road and the torrent, which does not understand being thwarted, and will force its way, let the pines grow ever so thick, or the rocks be ever so formidable.

Notwithstanding the forbidding air of this narrow dell, Industry has contrived to enliven its steeps with habitations, to raise water by means of a wheel, and to cover the surface of

the rocks with soil. By this means large crops of oats and flax are produced, and most of the huts have gardens filled with poppies, which seem to thrive in this parched situation.

> "Urit enim lini campum seges, urit avenæ,
> Urunt Lethæo perfusa papavera somno."

The farther we advanced in the dell, the larger were the plantations which discovered themselves. For what specific purpose these gaudy flowers meet with such encouragement, I had neither time nor language to enquire; the mountaineers stuttering a gibberish unintelligible even to Germans. Probably opium is extracted from them; or, perhaps, if you love a conjecture, Morpheus has transferred his abode from the Cimmerians to a cavern somewhere or other in the recesses of these endless mountains. Poppies, you know, in poetic travels, always denote the skirts of his soporific reign, and I do not remember a region better calculated for undisturbed repose than the narrow clefts and gullies which run up amongst these rocks, lost in vapours impervious to the sun, and moistened by rills and showers, whose continual tricklings inspire a drowsiness not easily to be resisted. Add to these circumstances the waving of the pines,

and the hum of bees seeking their food in the crevices, and you will have as sleepy a region as that in which Spenser and Ariosto have placed the nodding deity.

But we may as well keep our eyes open for the present, and look at the beautiful country round Brixen, where I arrived in the cool of the evening, and breathed the freshness of a garden immediately beneath my window. The thrushes, which nest amongst its shades, saluted me the moment I awoke next morning.

ITALY.

ITALY.

LETTER I.

Bolsano.—Indications of approaching Italy.—Fire-flies.—Appearance of the Peasantry.—A forest Lake.—Arrive at Borgo di Volsugano.—Prospect of Hills in the Venetian State.—Gorgeous Flies.—Fortress of Covalo.—Leave the country of crags and precipices and enter the territory of the Bassanese.—Groves of olives and vines.—Classic appearance of Bassano.—Happy groups.—Pachierotti, the celebrated singer.—Anecdote of him.

July 29, 1780.

We proceeded over fertile mountains to Bolsano. It was here first that I noticed the rocks cut into terraces, thick set with melons and Indian corn; fig-trees and pomegranates hanging over garden walls, clustered with fruit. In the evening we perceived several further indications of approaching Italy; and after sun-set the Adige, rolling its full tide between precipices, which looked terrific in the dusk. Myriads of fire-flies sparkled amongst the shrubs on

the bank. I traced the course of these exotic insects by their blue light, now rising to the summits of the trees, now sinking to the ground, and associating with vulgar glow-worms. We had opportunities enough to remark their progress, since we travelled all night; such being my impatience to reach the promised land!

Morning dawned just as we saw Trent dimly before us. I slept a few hours, then set out again (July 30th), after the heats were in some measure abated, and leaving Bergine, where the peasants were feasting before their doors, in their holiday dresses, with red pinks stuck in their ears instead of rings, and their necks surrounded with coral of the same colour, we came through a woody valley to the banks of a lake, filled with the purest and most transparent water, which loses itself in shady creeks, amongst hills entirely covered with shrubs and verdure.

The shores present one continual thicket, interspersed with knots of larches and slender almonds, starting from the underwood. A cornice of rock runs round the whole, except where the trees descend to the very brink, and dip their boughs in the water.

It was six o'clock when I caught the sight of

this unsuspected lake, and the evening shadows stretched nearly across it. Gaining a very rapid ascent, we looked down upon its placid bosom, and saw several airy peaks rising above tufted foliage. I quitted the contemplation of them with regret, and, in a few hours, arrived at Borgo di Volsugano; the scene of the lake still present before the eye of my fancy.

July 31st.—My heart beat quick when I saw some hills, not very distant, which I was told lay in the Venetian State, and I thought an age, at least, had elapsed before we were passing their base. The road was never formed to delight an impatient traveller, loose pebbles and rolling stones render it, in the highest degree, tedious and jolting. I should not have spared my execrations, had it not traversed a picturesque valley, overgrown with juniper, and strewed with fragments of rock, precipitated, long since, from the surrounding eminences, blooming with cyclamens.

I clambered up several of these crags,

Fra gli odoriferi ginepri,*

to gather the flowers I have just mentioned, and found them deliciously scented. Fratillarias,

* Ariosto Orlando Furioso.—*Canto 7, stanza 32.*

and the most gorgeous flies, many of which I here noticed for the first time, were fluttering about and expanding their wings to the sun. There is no describing the numbers I beheld, nor their gaily varied colouring. I could not find in my heart to destroy their felicity; to scatter their bright plumage and snatch them for ever from the realms of light and flowers. Had I been less compassionate, I should have gained credit with that respectable corps, the torturers of butterflies; and might, perhaps, have enriched their cabinets with some unknown captives. However, I left them imbibing the dews of heaven, in free possession of their native rights; and having changed horses at Tremolano, entered at length, my long-desired Italy.

The pass is rocky and tremendous, guarded by the fortress of Covalo, in possession of the empress queen, and only fit, one should think, to be inhabited by her eagles. There is no attaining this exalted hold but by the means of a cord let down many fathoms by the soldiers, who live in dens and caverns, which serve also as arsenals, and magazines for powder; whose mysteries I declined prying into, their approach being a little too aërial for my earthly frame. A black

vapour, tinging their entrance, completed the romance of the prospect, which I never shall forget.

For two or three leagues there was little variation in the scenery; cliffs, nearly perpendicular on both sides, and the Brenta, foaming and thundering below. Beyond, the rocks began to be mantled with vines and gardens. Here and there a cottage shaded with mulberries, made its appearance, and we often discovered, on the banks of the river, ranges of white buildings, with courts and awnings, beneath which numbers of women and children were employed in manufacturing silk. As we advanced, the stream gradually widened, and the rocks receded; woods were more frequent and cottages thicker strown.

About five in the evening we left the country of crags and precipices, of mists and cataracts, and were entering the fertile territory of the Bassanese. It was now I beheld groves of olives, and vines clustering the summits of the tallest elms; pomegranates in every garden, and vases of citron and orange before almost every door. The softness and transparency of the air soon told me I was arrived in happier climates; and I felt sensations of joy and novelty run through

my veins, upon beholding this smiling land of groves and verdure stretched out before me. A few hazy vapours, I can hardly call them clouds, rested upon the extremities of the landscape; and, through their medium, the sun cast an oblique and dewy ray. Peasants were returning home, singing as they went, and calling to each other over the hills; whilst the women were milking goats before the wickets of the cottage, and preparing their country fare.

I left them enjoying it, and soon beheld the ancient ramparts and cypresses of Bassano; whose classic appearance recalled the memory of former times, and answered exactly the ideas I had pictured to myself of Italian edifices. Though encompassed by walls and turrets, neither soldiers nor custom-house officers start out from their concealment, to question and molest a weary traveller, for such is the happiness of the Venetian state, at least of the terra firma provinces, that it does not contain, I believe, above four regiments. Istria, Dalmatia, and the maritime frontiers, are more formidably guarded, as they touch, you know, the whiskers of the Turkish empire.

Passing under a Doric gateway, we crossed the

chief part of the town in the way to our locanda, pleasantly situated, and commanding a level green, where people walk and take ices by moonlight. On the right, the Franciscan church, and convent, half hid in the religious gloom of pine and cypress; to the left, a perspective of walls and towers rising from the turf, and marking it, when I arrived, with long shadows, in front; where the lawn terminates, meadow, wood, and garden run quite to the base of the mountains.

Twilight coming on, this beautiful spot swarmed with company, sitting in circles upon the grass, refreshing themselves with fruit and sherbets, or lounging upon the bank beneath the towers. They looked so free and happy that I longed to be acquainted with them; and, thanks to a warm-hearted old Venetian, (the Senator Querini,) was introduced to a group of the principal inhabitants. Our conversation ended in a promise to meet the next evening at the villa of La Contessa Roberti, about a league from Bassano, and then to return together and sing to the praise of Pachierotti, their idol, as well as mine.

You can have no idea what pleasure we mutually found in being of the same faith, and believing in one singer; nor can you imagine what

effects that musical divinity produced at Padua, where he performed a few years ago, and threw his audience into such raptures, that it was some time before they recovered. One in particular, a lady of distinction, fainted away the instant she caught the pathetic accents of his voice, and was near dying a martyr to its melody. La Contessa, who sings in the truest taste, gave me a detail of the whole affair, "Egli ha fatto veramente un fanatismo a Padua," was her expression. I assured her we were not without idolatry in England, upon his account; but that in this, as well as in other articles of belief, there were many abominable heretics.

LETTER II.

Villa of Mosolente.—The route to Venice.—First view of that city.—Striking prospect from the Leon Bianco.—Morning scene on the grand canal.—Church of Santa Maria della Salute.—Interesting group of stately buildings.—Convent of St. Giorgio Maggiore.—The Redentore.—Island of the Carthusians.

August 1st, 1780.

THE whole morning not a soul stirred who could avoid it. Those who were so active and lively the night before, were now stretched languidly upon their couches. Being to the full as idly disposed, I sat down and wrote some of this dreaming epistle; then feasted upon figs and melons; then got under the shade of the cypress, and slumbered till evening, only waking to dine, and take some ice.

The sun declining apace, I hastened to my engagement at Mosolente (for so is the villa called) placed on a verdant hill encircled by others as

lovely, and consisting of three light pavilions connected by porticos; just such as we admire in the fairy scenes of an opera. A vast flight of steps leads to the summit, where Signora Roberti and her friends received me with a grace and politeness that can never want a place in my memory. We rambled over all the apartments of this agreeable edifice, characterised by airiness and simplicity. The pavement encrusted with a composition as cool and polished as marble; the windows, doors, and balconies adorned with silver iron work, commanding scenes of meads and woodlands that extend to the shores of the Adriatic; slender towers, and cypresses rising above the levels; and the hazy mountains beyond Padua, diversifying the expanse, form altogether a landscape which the elegant imagination of Horizonti never exceeded.

I gazed on this delightful view till it faded in the dusk; then returning to Bassano, repaired to an illuminated hall, and heard Signora Roberti sing the very air which had excited such transport at Padua. As soon as she had ended, a band of various instruments stationed in the open street began a lively symphony, which would have delighted me at any other time; but now, I wished

them a thousand leagues away, so pleasingly melancholy an impression did the air I had been listening to leave on my mind.

At midnight I took leave of my obliging hosts, who were just setting out for Padua. They gave me a thousand kind invitations, and I hope some future day to accept them.

August 2.

Our route to Venice lay winding about the variegated plains I had surveyed from Mosolente; and after dining at Treviso we came in two hours and a half to Mestre, between grand villas and gardens peopled with statues. Embarking our baggage at the last mentioned place, we stepped into a gondola, whose even motion was very agreeable after the jolts of a chaise. We were soon out of the canal of Mestre, terminated by an isle which contains a cell dedicated to the Holy Virgin, peeping out of a thicket, whence spire up two tall cypresses. Its bells tingled as we passed along and dropped some paolis into a net tied at the end of a pole stretched out to us for that purpose.

As soon as we had doubled the cape of this diminutive island, an expanse of sea opened to our view, the domes and towers of Venice rising

from its bosom. Now we began to distinguish Murano, St. Michele, St. Giorgio in Alga, and several other islands, detached from the grand cluster, which I hailed as old acquaintances ; innumerable prints and drawings having long since made their shapes familiar. Still gliding forward we every moment distinguished some new church or palace in the city, suffused with the rays of the setting sun, and reflected with all their glow of colouring from the surface of the waters.

The air was calm ; the sky cloudless ; a faint wind just breathing upon the deep, lightly bore its surface against the steps of a chapel in the island of San Secondo, and waved the veil before its portal, as we rowed by and coasted the walls of its garden overhung with fig-trees and surmounted by spreading pines. The convent discovers itself through their branches, built in a style somewhat morisco, and level with the sea, except where the garden intervenes.

We were now drawing very near the city, and a confused hum began to interrupt the evening stillness ; gondolas were continually passing and repassing, and the entrance of the Canal Reggio, with all its stir and bustle, lay before us. Our gondoliers turned with much address through a

crowd of boats and barges that blocked up the way, and rowed smoothly by the side of a broad pavement, covered with people in all dresses and of all nations.

Leaving the Palazzo Pesaro, a noble structure with two rows of arcades and a superb rustic, behind, we were soon landed before the Leon Bianco, which being situated in one of the broadest parts of the grand canal, commands a most striking assemblage of buildings. I have no terms to describe the variety of pillars, of pediments, of mouldings, and cornices, some Grecian, others Saracenic, that adorn these edifices, of which the pencil of Canaletti conveys so perfect an idea as to render all verbal description superfluous. At one end of this grand scene of perspective appears the Rialto; the sweep of the canal conceals the other.

The rooms of our hotel are spacious and cheerful; a lofty hall, or rather gallery, painted with grotesque in a very good style, perfectly clean, floored with a marbled stucco, divides the house, and admits a refreshing current of air. Several windows near the ceiling look into this vast apartment, which serves in lieu of a court, and is rendered perfectly luminous by a glazed arcade,

thrown open to catch the breezes. Through it I passed to a balcony which impends over the canal, and is twined round with plants forming a green festoon springing from two large vases of orange trees placed at each end. Here I established myself to enjoy the cool, and observe, as well as the dusk would permit, the variety of figures shooting by in their gondolas.

As night approached, innumerable tapers glimmered through the awnings before the windows. Every boat had its lantern, and the gondolas moving rapidly along were followed by tracks of light, which gleamed and played upon the waters. I was gazing at these dancing fires when the sounds of music were wafted along the canals, and as they grew louder and louder, an illuminated barge, filled with musicians, issued from the Rialto, and stopping under one of the palaces, began a serenade, which stilled every clamour and suspended all conversation in the galleries and porticos; till, rowing slowly away, it was heard no more. The gondoliers catching the air, imitated its cadences, and were answered by others at a distance, whose voices, echoed by the arch of the bridge, acquired a plaintive and interesting tone. I retired to rest, full of the

sound; and long after I was asleep, the melody seemed to vibrate in my ear.

August 3.

It was not five o'clock before I was aroused by a loud din of voices and splashing of water under my balcony. Looking out, I beheld the grand canal so entirely covered with fruits and vegetables, on rafts and in barges, that I could scarcely distinguish a wave. Loads of grapes, peaches and melons arrived, and disappeared in an instant, for every vessel was in motion; and the crowds of purchasers hurrying from boat to boat, formed a very lively picture. Amongst the multitudes, I remarked a good many whose dress and carriage announced something above the common rank; and upon enquiry I found they were noble Venetians, just come from their casinos, and met to refresh themselves with fruit, before they retired to sleep for the day.

Whilst I was observing them, the sun began to colour the balustrades of the palaces, and the pure exhilarating air of the morning drawing me abroad, I procured a gondola, laid in my provision of bread and grapes, and was rowed under the Rialto, down the grand canal to the marble steps of S. Maria della Salute, erected by the

Senate in performance of a vow to the Holy Virgin, who begged off a terrible pestilence in 1630. The great bronze portal opened whilst I was standing on the steps which lead to it, and discovered the interior of the dome, where I expatiated in solitude; no mortal appearing except an old priest who trimmed the lamps and muttered a prayer before the high altar, still wrapt in shadows. The sun-beams began to strike against the windows of the cupola, just as I left the church and was wafted across the waves to the spacious platform in front of St. Giorgio Maggiore, one of the most celebrated works of Palladio.

When my first transport was a little subsided, and I had examined the graceful design of each particular ornament, and united the just proportion and grand effect of the whole in my mind, I planted my umbrella on the margin of the sea, and viewed at my leisure the vast range of palaces, of porticos, of towers, opening on every side and extending out of sight. The Doge's palace and the tall columns at the entrance of the place of St. Mark, form, together with the arcades of the public library, the lofty Campanile and the cupolas of the ducal church, one of

the most striking groups of buildings that art can boast of. To behold at one glance these stately fabrics, so illustrious in the records of former ages, before which, in the flourishing times of the republic, so many valiant chiefs and princes have landed, loaded with oriental spoils, was a spectacle I had long and ardently desired. I thought of the days of Frederic Barbarossa, when looking up the piazza of St. Mark, along which he marched in solemn procession, to cast himself at the feet of Alexander the Third, and pay a tardy homage to St. Peter's successor. Here were no longer those splendid fleets that attended his progress; one solitary galeass was all I beheld, anchored opposite the palace of the Doge and surrounded by crowds of gondolas, whose sable hues contrasted strongly with its vermilion oars and shining ornaments. A party-coloured multitude was continually shifting from one side of the piazza to the other; whilst senators and magistrates in long black robes were already arriving to fill their respective offices.

I contemplated the busy scene from my peaceful platform, where nothing stirred but aged devotees creeping to their devotions, and, whilst I remained thus calm and tranquil, heard the

distant buzz of the town. Fortunately some length of waves rolled between me and its tumults; so that I ate my grapes, and read Metastasio, undisturbed by officiousness or curiosity. When the sun became too powerful, I entered the nave.

After I had admired the masterly structure of the roof and the lightness of its arches, my eyes naturally directed themselves to the pavement of white and ruddy marble, polished, and reflecting like a mirror the columns which rise from it. Over this I walked to a door that admitted me into the principal quadrangle of the convent, surrounded by a cloister supported on Ionic pillars, beautifully proportioned. A flight of stairs opens into the court, adorned with balustrades and pedestals, sculptured with elegance truly Grecian. This brought me to the refectory, where the chef-d'œuvre of Paul Veronese, representing the marriage of Cana in Galilee, was the first object that presented itself. I never beheld so gorgeous a group of wedding-garments before; there is every variety of fold and plait that can possibly be imagined. The attitudes and countenances are more uniform, and the guests appear a very genteel, decent sort of people, well used to

the mode of their times and accustomed to miracles.

Having examined this fictitious repast, I cast a look on a long range of tables covered with very excellent realities, which the monks were coming to devour with energy, if one might judge from their appearance. These sons of penitence and mortification possess one of the most spacious islands of the whole cluster, a princely habitation, with gardens and open porticos, that engross every breath of air; and, what adds not a little to the charms of their abode, is the facility of making excursions from it, whenever they have a mind.

The republic, jealous of ecclesiastical influence, connives at these amusing rambles, and, by encouraging the liberty of monks and churchmen, prevents their appearing too sacred and important in the eyes of the people, who have frequent proofs of their being mere flesh and blood, and that of the frailest composition. Had the rest of Italy been of the same opinion, and profited as much by Fra Paolo's maxims, some of its fairest fields would not, at this moment, lie uncultivated, and its ancient spirit might have revived. However, I can scarcely think the mo-

ment far distant, when it will assert its natural prerogatives, and look back upon the tiara, with all its host of scaring phantoms, as the offspring of a feverish dream.

Full of prophecies and bodings, I moved slowly out of the cloisters; and, gaining my gondola, arrived, I know not how, at the flights of steps which lead to the Redentore, a structure so simple and elegant, that I thought myself entering an antique temple, and looked about for the statue of the God of Delphi, or some other graceful divinity. A huge crucifix of bronze soon brought me to times present.

The charm being thus dissolved, I began to perceive the shapes of rueful martyrs peeping out of the niches around, and the bushy beards of capuchin friars wagging before the altars. These good fathers had decorated the nave with orange and citron trees, placed between the pilasters of the arcades; and on grand festivals, it seems, they turn the whole church into a bower, strew the pavement with leaves, and festoon the dome with flowers.

I left them occupied with their plants and their devotions. It was mid-day, and I begged to be rowed to some woody island, where

I might dine in shade and tranquillity. My gondoliers shot off in an instant; but, though they went at a very rapid rate, I wished to advance still faster, and getting into a bark with six oars, swept along the waters, soon left the Zecca and San Marco behind; and, launching into the plains of shining sea, saw turret after turret, and isle after isle, fleeting before me. A pale greenish light ran along the shores of the distant continent, whose mountains seemed to catch the motion of my boat, and to fly with equal celerity.

I had not much time to contemplate the beautiful effects on the waters—the emerald and purple hues which gleamed along their surface. Our prow struck, foaming, against the walls of the Carthusian garden, before I recollected where I was, or could look attentively around me. Permission being obtained, I entered this cool retirement, and putting aside with my hands the boughs of figs and pomegranates, got under an ancient bay-tree on the summit of a little knoll, near which several tall pines lift themselves up to the breezes. I listened to the conversation they held, with a wind just flown from Greece, and charged, as well as I could

understand this airy language, with many affectionate remembrances from their relations on Mount Ida.

I reposed amidst fragrant leaves, fanned by a constant air, till it pleased the fathers to send me some provisions, with a basket of fruit and wine. Two of them would wait upon me, and ask ten thousand questions about Lord George Gordon, and the American war. I, who was deeply engaged with the winds, and a thousand agreeable associations excited by my Grecian fancies, wished my interrogators in purgatory, and pleaded ignorance of the Italian language. This circumstance extricated me from my embarrassment, and procured me a long interval of repose.

LETTER III.

Church of St. Mark. — The Piazza. — Magnificent festivals formerly celebrated there.—Stately architecture of Sansovino.—The Campanile.—The Loggetta.—The Ducal Palace.—Colossal Statues. — Giants' Stairs.—Fit of enthusiasm. — Evening-scene in the great Square.—Venetian intrigue.—Confusion of languages. — Madame de Rosenberg. — Character of the Venetians.

The rustling of the pines had the same effect as the murmurs of other old story-tellers, and I dozed undisturbed till the people without, in the boat, (who wondered not a little, I dare say, what was become of me within) began a sort of chorus in parts, full of such plaintive modulation, that I still thought myself under the influence of a dream, and, half in this world and half in the other, believed, like the heroes of Fingal, that I had caught the music of the spirits of the hill.

When I was thoroughly convinced of the reality of these sounds, I moved towards the shore whence they proceeded: a glassy sea lay

before me; no gale ruffled the expanse; every breath had subsided, and I beheld the sun go down in all its sacred calm. You have experienced the sensations this moment inspires; imagine what they must have been in such a scene, and accompanied with a melody so simple and pathetic. I stepped into my boat, and now instead of encouraging the speed of the gondoliers, begged them to abate their ardour, and row me lazily home. They complied, and we were near an hour reaching the platform in front of the ducal palace, thronged as usual with a variety of nations. I mixed a moment with the crowd; then directed my steps to the great mosque, I ought to say the church of St. Mark; but really its cupolas, slender pinnacles, and semicircular arches, have so oriental an appearance, as to excuse this appellation. I looked a moment at the four stately coursers of bronze and gold that adorn the chief portal, and then took in, at one glance, the whole extent of the piazza, with its towers and standards. A more noble assemblage was never exhibited by architecture. I envied the good fortune of Petrarch, who describes, in one of his letters, a tournament held in this princely opening.

Many are the festivals which have been here celebrated. When Henry the Third left Poland to mount the throne of France, he passed through Venice, and found the Senate waiting to receive him in their famous square, which by means of an awning stretched from the balustrades of opposite palaces, was metamorphosed into a vast saloon, sparkling with artificial stars, and spread with the richest carpets of the East. What a magnificent idea! The ancient Romans, in the zenith of power and luxury, never conceived a greater. It is to them, however, the Venetians are indebted for the hint, since we read of the Coliseo and Pompey's theatre being sometimes covered with transparent canvas, to defend the spectators from the heat or sudden rain, and to tint the scene with soft agreeable colours.

Having enjoyed the general perspective of the piazza, I began to enter into particulars, and examine the bronze pedestals of the three standards before the great church, designed by Sansovino in the true spirit of the antique, and covered with relievos, at once bold and elegant. It is also to this celebrated architect we are indebted for the stately façade of the *Procuratie nuove,* which

forms one side of the square, and presents an uninterrupted series of arcades and marble columns exquisitely wrought. Opposite this magnificent range appears another line of palaces, whose architecture, though far removed from the Grecian elegance of Sansovino, impresses veneration, and completes the pomp of the view.

There is something strange and singular in the Tower or Campanile, which rises distinct from the smooth pavement of the square, a little to the left as you stand before the chief entrance of St. Mark's. The design is barbarous, and terminates in uncouth and heavy pyramids; yet in spite of these defects, it struck me with awe. A beautiful building called the Loggetta, and which serves as a guard-house during the convocation of the Grand Council, decorates its base. Nothing can be more enriched, more finished than this structure; which, though far from diminutive, is in a manner lost at the foot of the Campanile. This enormous fabric seems to promise a long duration, and will probably exhibit Saint Mark and his Lion to the latest posterity. Both appear in great state towards its summit, and have nothing superior, but an archangel perched on the topmost pinnacle, and pointing to the

skies. The dusk prevented my remarking the various sculptures with which the Loggetta is crowded.

Crossing the ample space between this graceful edifice and the ducal palace, I passed through a labyrinth of pillars and entered the principal court, of which nothing but the great outline was visible at so late an hour. Two reservoirs of bronze richly sculptured diversify the area. In front a magnificent flight of steps presents itself, by which the senators ascend through vast and solemn corridors, which lead to the interior of the edifice. The colossal statues of Mars and Neptune guard the entrance, and have given the appellation of *scala dei giganti,* to the steps below, which I mounted not without respect; and, leaning against the balustrades, formed like the rest of the building of the rarest marbles, contemplated the tutelary divinities.

My admiration was shortly interrupted by one of the sbirri, or officers of police, who take their stands after sunset before the avenues of the palace, and who told me the gates were upon the point of being closed. So, hurrying down the steps, I left a million of delicate sculptures unexplored; for every pilaster, every frieze, every

entablature, is encrusted with porphyry, verde antique, or some other precious marble, carved into as many grotesque wreaths of foliage as we admire in the loggie of Raphael. The various portals, the strange projections; in short, the striking irregularity of these stately piles, delighted me beyond idea; and I was sorry to be forced to abandon them so soon, especially as the twilight, which bats and owls love not better than I do, enlarged every portico, lengthened every colonnade, and increased the dimensions of the whole, just as imagination desired. This faculty would have had full scope had I but remained an hour longer. The moon would then have gleamed upon the gigantic forms of Mars and Neptune, and discovered the statues of ancient heroes emerging from the gloom of their niches.

Such an interesting combination of objects, such regal scenery, with the reflection that many of their ornaments once contributed to the decoration of Athens, transported me beyond myself. The sbirri thought me distracted. True enough, I was stalking proudly about like an actor in an ancient Grecian tragedy, lifting up his hands

to the consecrated fanes and images around, expecting the reply of his attendant chorus, and declaiming the first verses of Œdipus Tyrannus.

This fit of enthusiasm was hardly subsided, when I passed the gates of the palace into the great square, which received a faint gleam from its casinos and palaces, just beginning to be lighted up, and to become the resort of pleasure and dissipation. Numbers were walking in parties upon the pavement; some sought the convenient gloom of the porticos with their favourites; others were earnestly engaged in conversation, and filled the gay illuminated apartments, where they resorted to drink coffee and sorbet, with laughter and merriment. A thoughtless giddy transport prevailed; for, at this hour, anything like restraint seems perfectly out of the question; and however solemn a magistrate or senator may appear in the day, at night he lays up wig and robe and gravity to sleep together, runs intriguing about in his gondola, takes the reigning sultana under his arm, and so rambles half over the town, which grows gayer and gayer as the day declines.

Many of the noble Venetians have a little suite of apartments in some out-of-the-way corner, near the grand piazza, of which their families are totally ignorant. To these they skulk in the dusk, and revel undisturbed with the companions of their pleasures. Jealousy itself cannot discover the alleys, the winding passages, the unsuspected doors, by which these retreats are accessible. Many an unhappy lover, whose mistress disappears on a sudden with some fortunate rival, has searched for her haunts in vain. The gondoliers themselves, though the prime managers of intrigue, are often unacquainted with these interior cabinets. When a gallant has a mind to pursue his adventures with mystery, he rows to the piazza, orders his bark to wait, meets his goddess in the crowd, and vanishes from all beholders. Surely, Venice is the city in the universe best calculated for giving scope to the observations of a devil upon two sticks. What a variety of lurking-places would one stroke of his crutch uncover!

Whilst the higher ranks were solacing themselves in their casinos, the rabble were gathered in knots round the strollers and mountebanks,

singing and scaramouching in the middle of the square. I observed a great number of Orientals amongst the crowd, and heard Turkish and Arabic muttering in every corner. Here the Sclavonian dialect predominated; there some Grecian jargon, almost unintelligible. Had Saint Mark's church been the wondrous tower, and its piazza the chief square, of the city of Babylon, there could scarcely have been a greater confusion of languages.

The novelty of the scene afforded me no small share of amusement, and I wandered about from group to group, and from one strange exotic to another, asking and being asked innumerable ridiculous questions, and settling the politics of London and Constantinople, almost in the same breath. This instant I found myself in a circle of grave Armenian priests and jewellers; the next amongst Greeks and Dalmatians, who accosted me with the smoothest compliments, and gave proof that their reputation for pliability and address was not ill-founded.

I was entering into a grand harum-scarum discourse with some Russian counts or princes, or whatever you please, just landed with dwarfs,

and footmen, and governors, and staring like me, about them, when Madame de Rosenberg arrived, to whom I had the happiness of being recommended. She presented me to some of the most distinguished of the Venetian families at their great casino which looks into the piazza, and consists of five or six rooms, fitted up in a gay flimsy taste, neither rich nor elegant, where were a great many lights, and a great many ladies negligently dressed, their hair falling very freely about them, and innumerable adventures written in their eyes. The gentlemen were lolling upon the sofas, or lounging about the apartments.

The whole assembly seemed upon the verge of gaping, till coffee was carried round. This magic beverage diffused a temporary animation; and, for a moment or two, conversation moved on with a degree of pleasing extravagance; but the flash was soon dissipated, and nothing remained save cards and stupidity.

In the intervals of shuffling and dealing, some talked over the affairs of the grand council with less reserve than I expected; and two or three of them asked some feeble questions about the late tumults in London. It was one o'clock be-

fore all the company were assembled, and I left them at three, still dreaming over their coffee and card-tables. Trieze is their favourite game: *uno, due, tre, quatro, cinque, fante, cavallo re*, are eternally repeated; the apartments echoed no other sound.

I wonder a lively people can endure such monotony, for I have been told the Venetians are remarkably spirited; and so eager in the pursuit of amusement as hardly to allow themselves any sleep. Some, for instance, after declaiming in the Senate, walking an hour in the square, and fidgeting about from one casino to another till morning dawns, will get into a gondola, row across the Lagunes, take the post to Mestre or Fusina, and jumble over craggy pavements to Treviso, breakfast in haste, and rattle back again as if the Devil were charioteer: by eleven the party is restored to Venice, resumes robe and perriwig, and goes to council.

This may be very true, and yet I will never cite the Venetians as examples of vivacity. Their nerves unstrung by early debaucheries, allow no natural flow of lively spirits, and at best but a few moments of a false and feverish activity. The

approaches of sleep, forced back by an immoderate use of coffee, render them weak and listless, and the facility of being wafted from place to place in a gondola, adds not a little to their indolence. In short, I can scarcely regard their Eastern neighbours in a more lazy light, who, thanks to their opium and their harems, pass their lives in one perpetual doze.

LETTER IV.

Excessive heat.—The Devil and Senegal.—A dreary shore. —Scene of the Doge's nuptials with the sea.—Return to the Place of St. Mark.—Swarm of Lawyers.—Receptacles for anonymous accusations.—The Council of Ten.—Terrible punishments of its victims.—Statue of Neptune.—Fatal Waters.—Bridge of Sighs.—The Fontlamenti Nuovi. Conservatory of the Mendicanti.—An Oratorio.—Profound attention of the Audience.

August 4th, 1780.

THE heats were so excessive in the night, that I thought myself several times on the point of suffocation, tossed about like a wounded fish, and dreamt of the Devil and Senegal. Towards sunrise, a faint breeze restored me to life and reason. I slumbered till late in the day, and the moment I was fairly awake, ordered my gondolier to row out to the main ocean, that I might plunge into its waves, and hear and see nothing but waters around me.

We shot off, wound amongst a number of sheds, shops, churches, casinos, and palaces,

growing immediately out of the canals, without any apparent foundation. No quay, no terrace, not even a slab is to be seen before the doors; one step brings you from the hall into the bark, and the vestibules of the stateliest structures lie open to the waters, and but just above their level. I observed several, as I glided along, supported by rows of well-proportioned columns, adorned with terms and vases, beyond which the eye generally discovers a grand court, and sometimes a garden.

In about half an hour, we had left the thickest cluster of isles behind, and, coasting the place of St. Mark opposite to San Giorgio Maggiore, whose elegant frontispiece was distinctly reflected by the calm waters, launched into the blue expanse of sea; from which rise the Carthusian and two or three other woody islands. I hailed the spot where I had passed such a happy visionary evening, and nodded to my friends the pines.

A few minutes more brought me to a dreary, sun-burnt shore, stalked over by a few Sclavonian soldiers, who inhabit a castle hard by, go regularly to an ugly unfinished church, and from thence, it is to be hoped, to paradise; as the air

of their barracks is abominable, and kills them like blasted sheep.

Forlorn as this island appeared to me, I was told it was the scene of the Doge's pageantry at the feast of the Ascension; and the very spot to which he sails in the Bucentaur, previously to wedding the sea. You have heard enough, and if ever you looked into a show-box, seen full sufficient of this gaudy spectacle, without my enlarging upon the topic. I shall only say, that I was obliged to pursue, partly, the same road as the nuptial procession, in order to reach the beach, and was broiled and dazzled accordingly.

At last, after traversing some desert hillocks, all of a hop with toads and locusts (amongst which English heretics have the honour of being interred) I passed under an arch, and suddenly the boundless plains of ocean opened to my view. I ran to the smooth sands, extending on both sides out of sight, and dashed into the waves, which were coursing one another with a gentle motion, and breaking lightly on the shores. The tide rolled over me as I lay floating about, buoyed up by the water, and carried me wheresoever it listed. It might have borne me far out into the main before I had been aware, so totally

was I abandoned to the illusion of the moment. My ears were filled with murmuring undecided sounds; my limbs, stretched languidly on the surge, rose or sunk just as it swelled or subsided. In this passive state I remained, till the sun cast a less intolerable light, and the fishing-vessels, lying out in the bay at a great distance, spread their sails and were coming home.

Hastening back over the desert of locusts, I threw myself into the gondola; and, no wind, or wave opposing, was soon wafted across to those venerable columns, so conspicuous in the Place of St. Mark. Directing my course immediately to the ducal palace, I entered the grand court, ascending the giants' stairs, and examined at my leisure its bas reliefs. Then, taking the first guide that presented himself, I was shown along several cloisters and corridors, sustained by innumerable pillars, into the state apartments, which Tintoret and Paolo Veronese have covered with the triumphs of their country.

A swarm of lawyers filled the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, and one of the first advocates in the republic was pleading with all his might, before a solemn row of senators. The eyes and ears of the assembly seemed equally affected.

Clouds of powder, and volleys of execrations issuing every instant from the disputants, I got out of their way; and was led from hall to hall, and from picture to picture, with exemplary resignation. To be sure, I was heartily tired, but behaved with decency, having never once expressed how much I wished the chef-d'œuvres I had been contemplating, less smoky and numerous.

At last, I reached once more the colonnades at the entrance, and caught the sea-breeze in the open porticos which front San Giorgio Maggiore. The walls are covered in most places with grim visages sculptured in marble, whose mouths gape for accusations, and swallow every lie that malice and revenge can dictate. I wished for a few ears of the same kind, dispersed about the Doge's residence, to which one might apply one's own, and catch some account of the mysteries within; some little dialogue between the three Inquisitors, or debate in the Council of Ten.

This is the tribunal which holds the wealthy nobility in continual awe; before which they appear with trembling and terror; and whose summons they dare not disobey. Sometimes, by way of clemency, it condemns its victims to

perpetual imprisonment, in close, stifling cells, between the leads and beams of the palace; or, unwilling to spill the blood of a fellow-citizen, generously sinks them into dungeons, deep under the canals which wash its foundations; so that, above and below, its majesty is contaminated by the abodes of punishment. What other sovereign could endure the idea of having his immediate residence polluted with tears? or revel in his halls, conscious that many of his species were consuming their hours in lamentations above his head, and that but a few beams separated him from the scene of their tortures? However gaily disposed, could one dance with pleasure on a pavement, beneath which lie damp and gloomy caverns, whose inhabitants waste away by painful degrees, and feel themselves whole years a-dying? Impressed by these terrible ideas, I could not regard the palace without horror, and wished for the strength of a thousand antediluvians, to level it with the sea, lay open the secret recesses of punishment, and admit free gales and sunshine into every den.

When I had thus vented my indignation, I repaired to the statue of Neptune, whom twenty ages ago I should have invoked to second my

enterprise. Once upon a time no deity had a freer hand at razing cities. His execution was renowned throughout all antiquity, and the proudest monarchs deprecated the wrath of ΚΡΕΙΩΝ ΕΝΟΣΙΧΘΩΝ. But, like the other mighty ones of ancient days, his reign is past and his trident disregarded. Formerly any wild spirit found favour in the eyes of fortune, and was led along the career of glory to the deliverance of captives and the extirpation of monsters; but, in our degenerate times, this easy road to fame is no longer open, and the means of producing such signal events are perplexed and difficult.

Abandoning therefore the sad tenants of the piombi to their fate, I left the courts, and stepping into my bark was rowed down a canal overshadowed by the lofty walls of the palace. Beneath these fatal waters the dungeons I have also been speaking of are situated. There the wretches lie marking the sound of the oars, and counting the free passage of every gondola. Above, a marble bridge, of bold majestic architecture, joins the highest part of the prisons to the secret galleries of the palace; from whence criminals are conducted over the arch to a cruel and mysterious death. I shuddered whilst passing

below; and believe it is not without cause, this structure is named PONTE DEI SOSPIRI. Horrors and dismal prospects haunted my fancy upon my return. I could not dine in peace, so strongly was my imagination affected; but snatching my pencil, I drew chasms and subterraneous hollows, the domain of fear and torture, with chains, racks, wheels, and dreadful engines in the style of Piranesi. About sunset I went and refreshed myself with the cool air and cheerful scenery of the Fondamenti nuovi, a vast quay or terrace of white marble, which commands the whole series of isles, from San Michele to Torcello,

"That rise and glitter o'er the ambient tide."

Nothing can be more picturesque than the groups of towers and cupolas which they present, mixed with flat roofs and low buildings, and now and then a pine or cypress. Afar off, a little woody isle, called Il Deserto, swells from the ocean and diversifies its expanse.

When I had spent a delightful half-hour in viewing the distant isles, M. de Benincasa accompanied me to the Mendicanti, one of the four conservatorios, which give the best musical education conceivable to near one hundred young women. You may imagine how admirably those

of the Mendicanti in particular are taught, since their establishment is under the direction of Bertoni, who breathes around him the very soul of harmony. The chapel in which we sat to hear the oratorio was dark and solemn; a screen of lofty pillars, formed of black marble and highly polished, reflected the lamps which burn perpetually before the altar. Every tribune was thronged with people, whose profound silence showed them worthy auditors of this master's music. Here were no cackling old women, or groaning Methodists, such as infest our English tabernacles, and scare one's ears with hoarse coughs accompanied by the naso obligato. All were still and attentive, imbibing the plaintive notes of the voices with eagerness; and scarce a countenance but seemed deeply affected with David's sorrows, the subject of the performance. I sat retired in a solitary tribune, and felt them as my own. Night came on before the last chorus was sung, and I still seem to hear its sacred melody.

LETTER V.

M. de Viloison and his attendant Laplander.—Drawings of ancient Venetian costume in one of the Gradanigo palaces.—Titian's master-piece in the church of San Giovanni e Paolo.—The distant Euganean hills.

August 18, 1780.

IT rains; the air is refreshed and I have courage to resume my pen, which the sultry weather had forced to lie dormant so long. I like this odd town of Venice, and find every day some new amusement in rambling about its innumerable canals and alleys. Sometimes I pry about the great church of Saint Mark, and examine the variety of marbles and mazes of delicate sculpture with which it is covered. The cupola, glittering with gold, mosaic, and paintings of half the wonders in the Apocalypse, never fails to transport me to the period of the Eastern empire. I think myself in Constantinople, and expect Michael Paleologus with all his train.

One circumstance alone prevents my observing half the treasures of the place, and holds down my fancy just springing into the air: I mean the vile stench which exhales from every recess and corner of the edifice, and which all the incense of the altars cannot subdue.

When no longer able to endure this noxious atmosphere, I run up the Campanile in the piazza, and seating myself amongst the pillars of the gallery, breathe the fresh gales which blow from the Adriatic; survey at my leisure all Venice beneath me, with its azure sea, white sails, and long tracks of islands shining in the sun. Having thus laid in a provision of wholesome breezes, I brave the vapours of the canals, and venture into the most curious and murky quarters of the city, in search of Turks and Infidels, that I may ask as many questions as I please about Cairo and Damascus.

Asiatics find Venice very much to their taste, and all those I conversed with allowed its customs and style of living had a good deal of conformity to their own. The eternal lounging in coffee-houses and sipping of sorbets agree perfectly well with the inhabitants of the Ottoman empire, who stalk about here in their proper dresses, and smoke their own exotic pipes, with-

out being stared and wondered at as in most other European capitals. Some few of these Orientals are communicative and enlightened; but, generally speaking, they know nothing beyond the rule of three, and the commonest transactions of mercantile affairs.

The Greeks are by far a more lively generation, still retaining their propensity to works of genius and imagination. Metastasio has been lately translated into their modern language, and some obliging papa or other has had the patience to put the long-winded romance of Clelia into a Grecian dress. I saw two or three of these volumes exposed on a stall, under the grand arcades of the public library, as I went one day to admire the antiques in its vestibules.

Whilst I was intent upon my occupation, a little door, I never should have suspected, flew open, and out popped Monsieur de Viloison, from a place where nothing, I believe, but broomsticks and certain other utensils were ever before deposited. This gentleman, the most active investigator of Homer since the days of the good bishop of Thessalonica, bespatters you with more learning in a minute than others communicate in half a year; quotes Arabic,

Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, &c. with formidable fluency; and drove me from one end of the room to the other with a storm of erudition. Syllables fell thicker than hail, and in an instant I found myself so weighed down and covered, that I prayed, for mercy's sake, to be introduced, by way of respite, to a Laplander whom he leads about as a curiosity; a poor harmless good sort of a soul, calm and indifferent, who has acquired the words of several Oriental languages to perfection: ideas he has in none.

We went all together to view a collection of medals in one of the Gradanigo palaces, and two or three inestimable volumes, filled with paintings that represent the dress of the ancient Venetians; so that I had an opportunity of observing to perfection all the Lapland nothingness of my companion. What a perfect void! Cold and silent as the polar regions, not one passion ever throbbed in his bosom; not one bright ray of fancy ever glittered in his mind; without love or anger, pleasure or pain, his days fleet smoothly along: all things considered, I must confess I envied such comfortable apathy.

After having passed an instructive hour in examining the medals and drawings, M. de Villoison proposed conducting me to the Armenian convent, but I begged to be excused, and went to San Giovanni e Paolo, a church to be held most holy in the annals of painting, since it contains that masterpiece of Titian, the martyrdom of the hermits St. Paul and St. Peter.

In the evening I rowed out as usual

"On the clear hyaline, the glassy sea,"

to observe the effect of sunset on the tufted gardens of the Giudeca, and to contemplate the distant Euganean hills, once the happiest region of Italy; where wandering nations enjoyed the simplicity of a pastoral life, long before the arrival of Antenor. In these primeval days deep forests and extensive pastures covered the shores of the Adriatic, and innumerable flocks hung on the brow of the mountains. This golden period ended upon the incursion of the Trojans and Heneti; who, led by Antenor, drove away the unfortunate savages, and possessed themselves of their habitations.

LETTER VI.

Isles of Burano, Torcello, and Mazorbo.—The once populous city of Altina.—An excursion.—Effects of our music on the inhabitants of the Islands.—Solitary fields infested by serpents.—Remains of ancient sculpture.—Antique and fantastic ornaments of the Cathedral of Torcello.—San Lorenzo's chair.—Dine in a Convent.—The Nuns.—Oratorio of Sisera.—Remarks on the music.—Singing of the Marchetti.—A female orchestra.

I AM just returned from visiting the isles of Burano, Torcello, and Mazorbo, distant about five miles from Venice. To these amphibious spots the Romans, inhabitants of eastern Lombardy, fled from the rapine of Attila; and, if we may believe Cassiodorus, there was a time when they presented a beautiful appearance. Beyond them, on the coast of the Lagunes, rose the once populous city of Altina, with its six stately gates, which Dandolo mentions. Its neighbourhood was scattered with innumerable villas and temples, composing altogether a prospect which Martial compares to Baiæ:

"Æmula Baianis Altini littora villis."

But this agreeable scene, like so many others, is passed entirely away, and has left nothing, except heaps of stones and mis-shapen fragments, to vouch for its former magnificence. Two of the islands, Costanziaco and Amiano, that are imagined to have contained the bowers and gardens of the Altinatians, have sunk beneath the waters; those which remain are scarcely worthy to rise above their surface.

Though I was persuaded little was left to be seen above ground, I could not deny myself the imaginary pleasure of treading a corner of the earth once so adorned and cultivated; and of walking over the roofs, perhaps, of undiscovered palaces. M. de R. to whom I communicated my ideas, entered at once into the scheme; hiring therefore a *peiotte*, we took some provisions and music (to us equally necessaries of life) and launched into the canal, between Saint Michael and Murano. Our instruments played several delightful airs, that called forth the inhabitants of every island, and held them in silence, as if spell-bound, on the edge of their quays and terraces, till we were out of hearing.

Leaving Murano far behind, Venice and its

world of turrets began to sink on the horizon, and the low desert isles beyond Mazorbo to lie stretched out before us. Now we beheld vast wastes of purple flowers, and could distinguish the low hum of the insects which hover above them; such was the stillness of the place. Coasting these solitary fields, we wound amongst several serpentine canals, bordered by gardens of figs and pomegranates, with neat Indian-looking inclosures of cane and reed; an aromatic plant, which the people justly dignify with the title of marine incense, clothes the margin of the waters. It proved very serviceable in subduing a musky odour, which attacked us the moment we landed, and which proceeds from serpents that lurk in the hedges. These animals, say the gondoliers, defend immense treasures which lie buried under the ruins. Woe to those who attempt to invade them, or to pry too cautiously about!

Not choosing to be devoured, we left many a mound of fragments unnoticed, and made the best of our way to a little green, bounded on one side by a miserable shed, decorated with the name of the Podesta's residence, and on the other by a circular church. Some remains

of tolerable antique sculpture are enchased in the walls; and the dome, supported by pillars of a smooth Grecian marble, though uncouth and ill-proportioned, impresses a sort of veneration, and transports the fancy to the twilight glimmering period when it was raised.

Having surveyed what little was visible, and given as much career to our imaginations as the scene inspired, we walked over a soil composed of crumbling bricks and cement to the cathedral; whose arches, in the ancient Roman style, convinced us that it dates at least as high as the sixth or seventh century.

Nothing can well be more fantastic than the ornaments of this structure, formed from the ruins of the Pagan temples of Altina, and encrusted with a gilt mosaic, like that which covers our Edward the Confessor's tomb. The pavement, composed of various precious marbles, is richer and more beautiful than one could have expected, in a place where every other object savours of the grossest barbarism. At the farther end, beyond the altar, appears a semicircular niche, with seats like the gradines of a diminutive amphitheatre; above rise the quaint forms of the apostles, in red, blue, green, and

black mosaic, and in the midst of the group a sort of marble chair, cool and penitential enough, where Saint Lorenzo Giustiniani sat to hold a provincial council, the Lord knows how long ago! The fount for holy water stands by the principal entrance, fronting this curious recess, and seems to have belonged to some place of Gentile worship. The figures of horned imps clinging round its sides, more devilish, more Egyptian, than any I ever beheld. The dragons on old china are not more whimsical; filled with bats' blood it would have been an admirable present to the sabbath of witches, and have cut a capital figure in their orgies. The sculpture is not the most delicate, but I cannot say a great deal about it, as very little light reaches the spot where it is fixed: indeed, the whole church is far from luminous, its windows being narrow and near the roof, with shutters composed of blocks of marble, which nothing but the whirlwinds of the last day, one should think, would move from their hinges.

By the time we had examined every nook and corner of this singular edifice, and tried to catch some small portion of sanctity by sitting in San Lorenzo's chair, dinner was prepared in a neigh-

bouring convent, and the nuns, allured by the sound of our flutes and oboes, peeped out of their cells and showed themselves by dozens at the grate. Some few agreeable faces and interesting eyes enlivened the dark sisterhood; all seemed to catch a gleam of pleasure from the music; two or three of them, probably the last immured, let fall a tear, and suffered the recollection of the world and its profane joys to interrupt for a moment their sacred tranquillity.

We stayed till the sun was low, on purpose that they might listen as long as possible to a harmony which seemed to issue, as the old abbess expressed herself, from the gates of paradise ajar. A thousand benedictions consecrated our departure; twilight came on just as we entered the bark and rowed out upon the waves, agitated by a fresh gale, but fearing nothing under the protection of Santa Margherita, whose good wishes our music had secured.

In two hours we were safely landed at the Fondamenti nuovi, and went immediately to the Mendicanti, where they were performing the oratorio of Sisera. The composer, a young man, had displayed great fire and originality in this

performance; and a knowledge of character seldom found in the most celebrated masters. The supplication of the thirsty chieftain, and Jael's insinuating arts and pious treachery, are admirably expressed; but the agitation and boding slumbers which precede his death, are imagined in the highest strain of genius. The terror and agony of his dreams made me start, more than once, from my seat; and all the horrors of his assassination seemed full before me.

Too much applause cannot be given to the Marchetti, who sang the part of Sisera, and seconded the composer's ideas by the most feeling and spirited execution. There are few things I shall regret more on leaving Venice, than this conservatorio. Whenever I am musically given, I fly to it, and hear the most striking finales in Paesiello's and Anfossi's operas, as long and often as I please.

The sight of the orchestra still makes me smile. You know, I suppose, it is entirely of the feminine gender, and that nothing is more common than to see a delicate white hand journeying across an enormous double bass, or a pair of roseate cheeks puffing, with all their efforts, at a French horn. Some that are grown old and

Amazonian, who have abandoned their fiddles and their lovers, take vigorously to the kettle-drum; and one poor limping lady, who had been crossed in love, now makes an admirable figure on the bassoon.

Good night! I am quite exhausted with composing a chorus for this angelic choir. The poetry I send you. The music takes up too much room to travel at present. One day or other, perhaps, we may hear it in some dark grove, when the moon is eclipsed and nature in alarm.

This is not the last letter you would receive from Venice, were I not hurrying to Lucca, where Pacchierotti sings next week, in Bertoni's opera of Quinto Fabio.

LETTER VII.

Coast of Fusina.—The Brenta.—A Village of Palaces.—Fiesso.—Exquisite singing of the Galuzzi.—Marietta Cornaro.—Scenes of enchantment and fascination.

I was sorry to leave Venice, and regretted my peaceful excursions upon the Adriatic. No bright rays illuminated my departure, the sun was concealed in clouds; but the coolness and perfume of the air made ample amends for his absence.

About an hour's rowing from the isle of Saint Giorgio in Alga, brought us to the coast of Fusina, right opposite the opening where the Brenta mixes with the sea. This river flows calmly between banks of verdure, crowned by poplars, with vines twining round every stalk, and depending from tree to tree in beautiful festoons. Beds of mint and iris clothe the brink of the stream, except where interrupted by a tall

growth of reeds and osiers. The morning continued to lower as we advanced; scarce a wind ventured to breathe: all was still and placid as the surface of the river. No sound struck my ears except the bargemen hallooing to open the sluices, and deepen the water.

As yet I had not perceived an habitation, nor any other objects than green inclosures and fields of Turkish corn, shaded with vines and poplars. It grew late before we glided along by the Mira, a village of palaces, whose courts and gardens, as magnificent as statues, terraces and vases can make them, are far from composing a rural prospect.

Such artificial scenery not engaging much of my attention, we stayed no longer than our dinner required, and reached the Dolo an hour before sunset. Passing the great sluices, whose gates opened with a thundering noise, we continued our course along the peaceful Brenta, winding its broad full stream through impenetrable copses. Day was about to close when we reached Fiesso; and it being a misty evening, I could scarcely distinguish the pompous façade of the Pisani palace. That of Cornaro, where we were engaged to sup, looks upon a broad mass of foliage

which I contemplated with pleasure as it sank in the dusk.

We walked a long while under a pavilion stretched before the entrance, breathing the freshness of the wood after a shower which had lately fallen. The Galuzzi sang some of her father Ferandini's compositions with surprising energy; her cheek was flushed, her eyes glistened; the whole tone of her countenance was that of a person rapt and inspired. I forgot both time and place while she was singing. The night stole imperceptibly away, before I awoke from my trance.

I do not recollect ever to have passed an evening, which every circumstance conspired to render so full of charm. In general, my musical pleasures suffer terrible abatements from the phlegm and stupidity of my neighbourhood; but here, every one seemed to catch the flame, and to listen with reciprocal delight. Marietta Cornaro, whose lively talents are the boast of the Venetians, threw quick around her the glancing fires of genius.

What with the song of the Galuzzi, and those intellectual meteors, I scarcely knew to what element I was transported, and doubted for seve-

ral moments, whether I was not fallen into a celestial dream; to wake was painful, and it was not without much lingering reluctance I left these scenes of enchantment and fascination, repeating with melancholy earnestness that pathetic sonnet of Petrarch's—

O giorno, o ora, o ultimo momento,
O stelle congiurate a' impoverirme!
O fido sguardo, or che volei tu dirme,
Partend' io, per non esser mai contento?

LETTER VIII.

Reveries.—Walls of Padua.—Confused Pile dedicated to Saint Anthony.—Devotion at his Shrine.—Penitential Worshippers.—Magnificent Altar.—Sculpture of Sansovino.—Colossal Chamber like Noah's Ark.

THE splendour of the rising sun, for once in my life, drew little of my attention. I was too deeply plunged in my reveries, to notice the landscape which lay before me; and the walls of Padua presented themselves some time ere I was aware. At any other moment, how sensibly should I have been affected with their appearance! How many ideas of Antenor and his Trojans, would have thronged into my memory! but now I regarded the scene with indifference, and passed many a palace, and many a woody garden, with my eyes riveted to the ground. The first object that appeared upon lifting them up, was a confused pile of spires and cupolas, dedicated to blessed Saint Anthony, one of whose most eloquent sermons the great Addison has

translated *con amore,* and in his very best manner.

You are too well apprised of the veneration I have always entertained for this inspired preacher, to doubt that I immediately repaired to his shrine. Mine was a disturbed spirit, and required all the balm of Saint Anthony's kindness to appease it. Perhaps you will say I had better have gone to bed, and applied myself to my sleepy friend, the pagan divinity. It is probable that you are in the right; but I could not retire to rest without first venting some portion of effervescence in sighs and supplications. The nave was filled with decrepit women and feeble children, kneeling by baskets of vegetables and other provisions; which, by good Anthony's interposition, they hoped to sell advantageously in the course of the day. Beyond these, nearer the choir, and in a gloomier part of the edifice, knelt a row of rueful penitents, smiting their breasts, and lifting their eyes to heaven. Further on, in front of the dark recess, where the sacred relics are deposited, a few desperate, melancholy sinners lay prostrate.

To these I joined myself. The sunbeams had not yet penetrated into this religious quarter;

and the only light it received proceeded from the golden lamps, which hang in clusters round the sanctuary. A lofty altar, decked with the most lavish magnificence, supports the shrine. Those who are profoundly touched with its sanctity, may approach, and walking round, look through the crevices of the tomb, which, it is observed, exude a balsamic odour. But supposing a traveller ever so heretical, I would advise him by no means to neglect this pilgrimage; since every part of the recess he visits, is decorated with exquisite sculptures. Sansovino and other renowned artists have vied with each other in carving the alto relievos of the arcade, which, for design and execution, would do honour to the sculptors of antiquity.

Having observed these objects with less exactness than they merited, I hastened to the inn, luckily hard by, and one of the best I am acquainted with. Here I soon fell asleep in defiance of sunshine. It is true my slumbers were not a little agitated. The saint had been deaf to my prayer, and I still found myself a frail, infatuated mortal.

At five I got up; we dined, and afterwards scarcely knowing, nor much caring, what became

of us, we strolled to the great hall of the town; an enormous edifice, larger considerably than that of Westminster, but free from stalls, or shops, or nests of litigation. The roof, one spacious vault of brown timber, casts a solemn gloom, which was still increased by the lateness of the hour, and not diminished by the wan light, admitted through the windows of pale blue glass. The size and shape of this colossal chamber, the arching of the roof, with enormous rafters stretching across it; and, above all, the watery gleams that glanced through the dull casements, possessed my fancy with ideas of Noah's ark, and almost persuaded me I beheld that extraordinary vessel. The representation one sees of it in many an old Dutch Bible, seems to be formed upon this very model, and for several moments I indulged the chimera of imagining myself confined within its precincts. Could I but choose my companions, I should have no great objection to encounter a deluge, and to float away a few months upon the waves!

We remained till night walking to and fro in the ark; it was then full time to retire, as the guardian of the place was by no means formed to divine our diluvian ideas.

LETTER IX.

Church of St. Justina.—Tombs of remote antiquity.—Ridiculous attitudes of rheumatic devotees.—Turini's music.—Another excursion to Fiesso.—Journey to the Euganean hills.—Newly discovered ruins.—High Mass in the great Church of Saint Anthony.—A thunder-storm.—Palladio's Theatre at Vicenza.—Verona.—An aerial chamber.—Striking prospect from it.—The Amphitheatre.—Its interior.—Leave Verona.—Country between that town and Mantua.—German soldiers.—Remains of the palace of the Gonzagas.—Paintings of Julio Romano.—A ruined garden.—Subterranean apartments.

IMMEDIATELY after breakfast we went to St. Justina's. Both extremities of the cross aisles are terminated by altar-tombs of very remote antiquity, adorned with uncouth sculptures of the evangelists, supported by wreathed columns of alabaster, round which, to my no small astonishment, four or five gawky fellows were waddling on their knees, persuaded, it seems, that this strange devotion would cure the rheumatism, or any other aches with which they were afflicted. You can have no conception of the ridiculous

attitudes into which they threw themselves; nor the difficulty with which they squeezed along, between the middle column of the tomb and those which surround it. No criminal in the pillory ever exhibited a more rueful appearance, no swine ever scrubbed itself more fervently than these infatuated lubbers.

I left them hard at work, taking more exercise than had been their lot for many a day; and, mounting into the organ gallery, listened to Turini's* music with infinite satisfaction. The loud harmonious tones of the instrument filled the whole edifice; and, being repeated by the echoes of its lofty domes and arches, produced a wonderful effect. Turini, aware of this circumstance, adapts his compositions, with great intelligence, to the place. Nothing can be more original than his style. Deprived of sight by an unhappy accident, in the flower of his days, he gave up his entire soul to music, and can scarcely be said to exist, but from its mediums.

When we came out of St. Justina's, the azure of the sky and the softness of the air inclined us to think of some excursion. Where could I wish to go, but to the place in which I

* A nephew of Bertoni, the celebrated composer.

had been so delighted? Besides, it was proper to make the Cornaro another visit, and proper to see the Pisani palace, which happily I had before neglected. All these proprieties considered, Madame de R. accompanied me to Fiesso.

The sun was just sunk when we arrived. The whole ether in a glow, and the fragrance of the arched citron alleys delightful. Beneath them I walked in the cool, till the Galuzzi began once more her enchanting melody. She sang till the fineness of the weather tempted us to quit the palace for the banks of the Brenta. A profound calm reigned upon the woods and the waters, and moonlight added serenity to a scene naturally peaceful.

We supped late: before the Galuzzi had repeated the airs which had most affected me, morning began to dawn.

September 8th.

The want of sound repose, after my return home, had thrown me into a feverish and impatient mood. I had scarcely snatched some slight refreshment, before I flew to the great organ at St. Justina's, but tried this time to compose myself, in vain.

Madame de Rosenberg, finding my endeavours

unsuccessful, proposed, by way of diverting my attention, that we should set out immediately for one of the Euganean hills, about six or seven miles from Padua, at the foot of which some antique baths had been very lately discovered. I consented without hesitation, little concerned whither I went, or what happened to me, provided the scene was often shifted. The lanes and inclosures we passed, in our road to the hills, appeared in all the gaiety that verdure, flowers, and sunshine could give them. But my pleasures were overcast, and I beheld every object, however cheerful, through a dusky medium.

Deeply engaged in conversation, distance made no impression, and I found myself entering the meadow, over which the ruins are scattered, whilst I imagined myself several miles distant. No scene could be more smiling than this which here presented itself, or answer, in a fuller degree, the ideas I had always formed of Italy.

Leaving our carriage at the entrance of the meadow, we traversed its surface, and shortly perceived among the grass, an oblong basin, incrusted with pure white marble. Most of the slabs are large and perfect, apparently brought

from Greece, and still retaining their polished smoothness. The pipes to convey the waters are still perfectly discernible; in short, the whole ground-plan may be easily traced. Near the principal bath, we remarked the platforms of several circular apartments, paved with mosaic, in a neat simple taste, far from inelegant. Weeds have not yet sprung up amongst the crevices; and the freshness of the ruin everywhere shows that it has not long been exposed.

Theodoric is the prince to whom these structures are attributed; and Cassiodorus, the prime chronicler of the country, is quoted to maintain the supposition. My spirit was too much engaged to make any learned parade, or to dispute upon a subject, which I abandon, with all its importance, to calmer and less impatient minds.

Having taken a cursory view of the ruins, we ascended the hill just above them, and surveyed a prospect of the same nature, though in a more lovely and expanded style than that which I beheld from Mosolente. Padua crowns the landscape, with its towers and cupolas rising from a continued grove; and, from the drawings I have

seen, I should conjecture that Damascus presents somewhat of a similar appearance.

Taking our eyes off this extensive prospect, we brought them home to the fragments beneath our feet. The walls exhibit the *opus reticulatum,* so common in the environs of Naples. A sort of terrace, with the remaining bases of columns which encircle the hill, leads me to imagine here were formerly arcades and porticos, constructed for enjoying the view; for on the summit I could trace no vestiges of any considerable edifice, and am therefore inclined to conclude, that nothing more than a colonnade surrounded the hill, leading perhaps to some slight fane, or pavilion, for the recreation of the bathers below.

A profusion of aromatic flowers covered the slopes, and exhaled additional perfumes, as the sun declined, and the still hour approached, which was wont to spread over my mind a divine composure, and to restore the tranquillity I might have lost in the day. But now it diffused its reviving coolness in vain, and I remained, if possible, more sad and restless than before.

September 9th.

You may imagine how I felt when the hour of leaving Padua drew near. It happened to

be a festival, and high mass was celebrated at the great church of Saint Anthony in all its splendour. The ceremony was about half over when such a peal of thunder reverberated through the vaults and cupolas, as I expected would have shaken them to their foundations. The principal dome appeared invested with a sheet of fire; and the effect of terror produced upon the majority of the congregation, by this sudden lighting up of the most gloomy recesses of the edifice, was so violent that they rushed out in the wildest confusion. Had my faith been less lively, I should have followed their example, but, absorbed in the thought of a separation from those to whom I felt fondly attached, I remained till the ceremony ended; then took leave of Madame de R. with heartfelt regret, and was driven away to Vicenza.

September 10th.

The morning being overcast, I went to Palladio's theatre. It is impossible to conceive a structure more truly classical, or to point out a single ornament which has not the best antique authority. I am not in the least surprised that the citizens of Vicenza enthusiastically gave into this great architect's plan,

and sacrificed large sums to erect so beautiful a model. When finished, they procured, at a vast expense, the representation of a Grecian tragedy, with its chorus and majestic decorations.

After I had mused a long while in the most retired recess of the edifice, fancying I had penetrated into a real and perfect monument of antiquity, which till this moment had remained undiscovered, we set out for Verona. The situation is striking and picturesque A long line of battlemented walls, flanked by venerable towers, mounts the hill in a grand irregular sweep, and incloses the city with many a woody garden, and grove of slender cypress. Beyond rises a group of mountains; opposite to which a plain presents itself, decked with all the variety of meads and thickets, olive-grounds, and vineyards.

Amongst these our road kept winding till we entered the city gate, and passed (the post knows how many streets and alleys in the way!) to the inn, a lofty handsome-looking building; but so full that we were obliged to take up with an apartment on its very summit, open to all the winds, like the magic chamber Apuleius men-

tions, and commanding the roofs of half Verona. Here and there a pine shot up amongst them, and the shady hills, terminating the perspective of walls and turrets, formed a romantic scene.

Placing our table in a balcony, to enjoy the prospect with greater freedom, we feasted upon fish from the Lago di Guarda, and the delicious fruits of the country. Thus did I remain, solacing myself, breathing the cool air, and remarking the tints of the mountains. Neither paintings nor antiques could tempt me from my aërial situation; I refused hunting out the famous works of Paul Veronese scattered over the town, and sat like the owl in the Georgics,

Solis et occasum servans de culmine summo.

Twilight drawing on, I left my haunt, and stealing down stairs, enquired for a guide to conduct me to the amphitheatre, perhaps the most entire monument of Roman days. The people of the house, instead of bringing me a quiet peasant, officiously delivered me up to a professed antiquary, one of those precise plausible young men, to whom, God help me! I have so capital an aversion. This sweet spark displayed all his little erudition, and flourished away upon cloacas and vomitoriums with eternal

fluency. He was very profound in the doctrine of conduits, and knew to admiration how the filthiness of all the amphitheatre was disposed of.

But perceiving my inattention, and having just grace enough to remark that I chose one side of the street when he preferred the other, and sometimes trotted through despair in the kennel, he made me a pretty bow, I threw him half-a-crown, and seeing the ruins before me, traversed a gloomy arcade and emerged alone into the arena. A smooth turf covers its surface, from which a spacious sweep of gradines rises to a majestic elevation. Four arches, with their simple Doric ornament, alone remain of the grand circular arcade which once crowned the highest seats of the amphitheatre; and, had it not been for Gothic violence, this part of the structure would have equally resisted the ravages of time. Nothing can be more exact than the preservation of the gradines; not a block has sunk from its place, and whatever trifling injuries they may have received have been carefully repaired. The two chief entrances are rebuilt with solidity and closed by portals, no passage being permitted through the amphi-

theatre except at public shows and representations, sometimes still given in the arena.

When I paced slowly across it, silence reigned undisturbed, and nothing moved, except the weeds and grasses which skirt the walls and tremble with the faintest breeze. Throwing myself upon the grass in the middle of the arena, I enjoyed the freedom of my situation, its profound stillness and solitude. How long I remained shut in by endless gradines on every side, wrapped as it were in the recollections of perished ages, is not worth noting down; but when I passed from the amphitheatre to the opening before it, night was drawing on, and the grand outline of a terrific feudal fortress, once inhabited by the Scaligeri, alone dimly visible.

September 11th.

Traversing once more the grand piazza, and casting a last glance upon the amphitheatre, we passed under a lofty arch which terminates the perspective, and left Verona by a wide, irregular, picturesque street, commanding, whenever you look back, a striking scene of towers, cypress, and mountains.

The country, between this beautiful town and Mantua, presents one continued grove of

dwarfish mulberries, with here and there a knot of poplars, and sometimes a miserable shed. Mantua itself rises out of a morass formed by the Mincio, whose course, in most places, is so choked up with reeds as to be scarcely discernible. It requires a creative imagination to discover any charms in such a prospect, and a strong prepossession not to be disgusted with the scene where Virgil was born.

The beating of drums, and sight of German whiskers, finished what croaking frogs and stagnant ditches had begun. Every classic idea being scared by such sounds and such objects, I dined in dudgeon, and refused stirring out till late in the evening.

A few paces from the town stand the remains of the palace where the Gonzagas formerly resided. This I could not resist looking at, and was amply rewarded. Several of the apartments, adorned by the bold pencil of Julio Romano, merit the most exact attention; and the arabesques, with which the stucco ceilings are covered, equal those of the Vatican. Being painted in fresco upon damp neglected walls, each year diminishes their number, and every winter moulders some beautiful figure away.

The subjects, mostly from antique fables, are treated with all the purity and gracefulness of Raphael; the story of Polypheme is very conspicuous. Acis appears, reclined with his beloved Galatea, on the shore of the ocean, whilst their gigantic enemy, seated above on the brow of Ætna, seems by the paleness and horrors of his countenance to meditate some terrible revenge.

When it was too late to examine the paintings any longer, I walked into a sort of court, or rather garden, which had been decorated with fountains and antique statues. Their fragments still remain amongst weeds and beds of flowers, for every corner of the place is smothered with vegetation. Here nettles grow thick and rampant; there, tuberoses and jessamine spring from mounds of ruins, which during the elegant reign of the Gonzagas led to grottoes and subterranean apartments, concealed from vulgar eyes, and sacred to the most refined enjoyments.

LETTER X.

Cross the Po.—A woody country.—The Vintage.—Reggio. Ridge of the Apennines.—Romantic ideas connected with those mountains.— Arrive at Modena.—Road to Bologna. —Magnificent Convent of Madonna del Monte.—Natural and political commotions in Bologna.—Proceed towards the mountains.—Dreary prospects.—The scenery improves. —Herds of goats.—A run with them.—Return to the carriage.—Wretched hamlet.—Miserable repast.

September 12th, 1780.

A SHOWER having fallen, the air was refreshed, and the drops still glittered upon the vines, through which our road conducted us. Three or four miles from Mantua the scene changed to extensive grounds of rice, and meads of the tenderest verdure watered by springs, whose frequent meanders gave to the whole prospect the appearance of a vast green carpet shot with silver. Further on we crossed the Po, and passing Guastalla, entered a woody country full of inclosures and villages; herds feeding in the

meadows, and poultry parading before every wicket.

The peasants were busied in winnowing their corn; or, mounted upon the elms and poplars, gathering the rich clusters from the vines that hang streaming in braids from one branch to another. I was surprised to find myself already in the midst of the vintage, and to see every road crowded with carts and baskets bringing it along; you cannot imagine a pleasanter scene.

Round Reggio it grew still more lively, and on the other side of that sketch-inviting little city, I remarked many a cottage that Tityrus might have inhabited, with its garden and willow hedge in flower, swarming with bees. Our road, the smoothest conceivable, enabled us to pass too rapidly through so cheerful a landscape. I caught glimpses of fields and copses as we were driven along, that could have afforded me amusement for hours, and orchards on gentle declivities, beneath which I could have walked till evening. The trees literally bent under their loads of fruit, and innumerable ruddy apples lay scattered upon the ground.

Beyond these rich masses of foliage, to which

the sun lent additional splendour, at the utmost extremity of the pastures, rose the irregular ridge of the Apennines, whose deep blue presented a striking contrast to the glowing colours of the foreground. I fixed my eyes on the chain of distant mountains, and indulged a thousand romantic conjectures of what was passing in their recesses—hermits absorbed in prayer—beautiful Contadine fetching water from springs, and banditti conveying their victims, perhaps at this very moment, to caves and fastnesses.

Such were the dreams that filled my fancy, and kept it incessantly employed till it was dusk, and the moon began to show herself; the same moon which but a few nights ago had seen me so happy at Fiesso. I left the carriage and running into the dim haze, abandoned myself to the recollections it excited. . . .

At length, having wandered where chance or the wildness of my fancy led, till the lateness of the evening alarmed me, I regained the chaise as fast as I could, and arrived between twelve and one at Modena, the place of my destination.

September 13th.

We traversed a champagne country in our way to Bologna, whose richness and fertility encreased in proportion as we drew near that celebrated mart of lap-dogs and sausages. A chain of hills commands the city, variegated with green inclosures and villas innumerable. On the highest acclivity of this range appears the magnificent convent of Madonna del Monte, embosomed in wood and joined to the town by a corridor a league in length. This vast portico ascending the steeps and winding amongst the thickets, sometimes concealed and sometimes visible, produces an effect wonderfully grand and singular. I longed to have mounted the height by so extraordinary a passage; and hope on some future day to be better acquainted with Santa Maria del Monte.

At present I have very little indeed to say about Bologna (where I passed only two hours) except that it is sadly out of humour, an earthquake and Cardinal Buoncompagni having disarranged both land and people. For half-a-year the ground continued trembling; and for these last six months, the legate and senators have grumbled and scratched incessantly; so that,

between natural and political commotions, the Bolognese must have passed an agreeable summer.

Such a report of the situation of things, you may suppose, was not likely to retard my journey. I put off delivering my letters to another opportunity, and proceeded immediately after dinner towards the mountains. We were soon in the midst of crags and stony channels, that stream with ten thousand rills in the winter season, but during the summer months reflect every sunbeam, and harbour half the scorpions in the country.

For many a toilsome league our prospect consisted of nothing but dreary hillocks and intervening wastes, more barren and mournful than those to which Mary Magdalene retired. Sometimes a crucifix or chapel peeped out of the parched fern and grasses, with which these desolate fields are clothed; and now and then we met a goggle-eyed pilgrim trudging along, and staring about him as if he waited only for night and opportunity to have additional reasons for hurrying to Loretto.

During three or four hours that we continued ascending; the scene increased in sterility and desolation; but, at the end of our second post,

the landscape began to alter for the better: little green valleys at the base of tremendous steeps, discovered themselves, scattered over with oaks, and freshened with running waters, which the nakedness of the impending rocks set off to advantage. The sides of the cliffs in general consist of rude mis-shapen masses; but their summits are smooth and verdant, and continually browsed by herds of white goats, which were gamboling on the edge of the precipices as we passed beneath.

I joined one of these frisking assemblies, whose shadows were stretched by the setting sun along the level herbage. There I sat a few minutes whilst they shook their beards at me, and tried to scare me with all their horns. Being tired with skipping and butting at me in vain, the whole herd trotted away, and I after them. They led me a dance from crag to crag and from thicket to thicket.

It was growing dusky apace, and wreaths of smoke began to ascend from the mysterious depths of the valleys. I was ignorant what monster inhabited such retirements, so gave over my pursuit lest some Polypheme or other might make me repent it. I looked around, the car-

riage was out of sight; but hearing the neighing of horses at a distance, I soon came up with them, and mounted another rapid ascent, from whence an extensive tract of cliff and forest land was discernible.

A chill wind blew from the highest peak of the Apennines, and made a dismal rustle amongst the woods of chesnut that hung on the mountain's side, through which we were forced to pass. Walking out of the sound of the carriage, I began interpreting the language of the leaves, not greatly to my own advantage or that of any being in the universe. I was no prophet of good, and had I but commanded an oracle, as ancient visionaries were wont, I should have flung mischief about me.

How long I continued in this strange temper I cannot pretend to say, but believe it was midnight before we emerged from the oracular forest, and saw faintly before us an assemblage of miserable huts, where we were to sleep. This wretched hamlet is suspended on the brow of a bleak mountain; and every gust that stirs, shakes the whole village to its foundations. At our approach two hags stalked forth with lanterns and invited us with a grin, which I shall always re-

member, to a dish of mustard and crows' gizzards, a dish I was more than half afraid of tasting, lest it should change me to some bird of darkness, condemned to mope eternally on the black rafters of the cottage.

After repeated supplications we procured a few eggs, and some faggots to make a fire. Pitching my bed in a warm corner I soon fell asleep, and forgot all my cares and inquietudes.

LETTER XI.

A sterile region.—Our descent into a milder landscape.—Distant view of Florence.—Moonlight effect.—Visit the Gallery.—Relics of ancient credulity.—Paintings.—A Medusa's head by Leonardo da Vinci.—Curious picture by Polemberg.—The Venus de Medicis.—Exquisitely sculptured figure of Morpheus.—Vast Cathedral.—Garden of Boboli.—Views from different parts of it.—Its resemblance to an antique Roman garden.

September 14th, 1780.

THE sun had not been long above the horizon, before we set forward upon a craggy pavement hewn out of rough cliffs and precipices. Scarcely a tree was visible, and the few that presented themselves began already to shed their leaves. The raw nipping air of this desert with difficulty spares a blade of vegetation; and in the whole range of these extensive eminences I could not discover a single corn-field or pasture. Inhabitants, you may guess, there were none. I would defy even a Scotch highlander to find means of subsistence in so rude a soil.

Towards mid-day, we had surmounted the dreariest part of our journey, and began to perceive a milder landscape. The climate improved as well as the prospect, and after a continual descent of several hours, we saw groves and villages in the dips of the hills, and met a string of mules and horses laden with fruit. I purchased some figs and peaches from this little caravan, and spread my repast upon a bank, in the midst of lavender bushes in full bloom.

Continuing our route, we bade adieu to the realms of poverty and barrenness, and entered a cultivated vale, shaded by woody acclivities. Amongst these we wound along, between groves of poplar and cypress, till late in the evening. Upon winding a hill we discovered Florence at a distance surrounded with gardens and terraces rising one above another; the full moon seemed to shine with a peculiar charm upon this favoured region. Her serene light on the pale grey of the olive, gave a visionary and Elysian appearance to the landscape, and I was sorry when I found myself excluded from it by the gates of Florence.

I slept as well as my impatience would allow, till it was time next morning (Sept. 15,) to visit the gallery, and worship the Venus de Medicis.

I felt, upon entering this world of refinement, as if I could have taken up my abode in it for ever, but, confused with the multitude of objects, I knew not on which first to bend my attention, and ran childishly by the ample ranks of sculptures, like a butterfly in a parterre, that skims, before it fixes, over ten thousand flowers.

Having taken my course down one side of the gallery, I turned the angle and discovered another long perspective, equally stored with master-pieces of bronze and marble. A minute brought me to the extremity of this range, vast as it was; then, flying down a third, adorned in the same delightful manner, I paused under the bust of Jupiter Olympius; and began to reflect a little more maturely upon the company in which I found myself. Opposite, appeared the majestic features of Minerva, breathing divinity: and Cybele, the mother of the gods.

Having regarded these powers with due veneration, I next cast my eyes upon a black figure, whose attitude seemed to announce the deity of sleep. You know my fondness for this drowsy personage, and that it is not the first time I have quitted the most splendid society for him. I found him at present, of touchstone, with the

countenance of a drowsy brat, sleeping through indigestion. The artist had not conceived very poetical ideas of the god, or else he never would have represented him with so little grace and dignity.

Displeased at finding my favourite subject profaned, I perceived the transports of enthusiasm beginning to subside, and felt myself calm enough to follow the herd of guides and spectators from chamber to chamber, cabinet to cabinet, without falling into errors of rapture and admiration. We were led slowly and moderately through the large rooms, containing the portraits of painters, good, bad, and indifferent, from Raphael to Liotard; then into a museum of bronzes, which would afford both amusement and instruction for years.

When I had rather alarmed than satisfied my curiosity by rapidly running over a multitude of candelabrums, urns, and sacred utensils, we entered a small luminous apartment, surrounded with cases richly decorated, and filled with the most exquisite models of workmanship in bronze and various metals, classed in exact order. Here are crowds of diminutive deities and tutelary lars, to whom the superstition of former [illegible]

attributed those midnight murmurs which were believed to presage the misfortunes of a family. Amongst these now neglected images are preserved a vast number of talismans, cabalistic amulets, and other grotesque relics of ancient credulity.

In the centre of the room I remarked a table, beautifully formed of polished gems, and, near it, the statue of a genius with his familiar serpent, and all his attributes; the guardian of the treasured antiquities. From this chamber we were conducted into another, which opens to that part of the gallery where the busts of Adrian and Antinous are placed. Two pilasters, delicately carved in trophies and clusters of ancient armour, stand on each side of the entrance; within are several perfumed cabinets of miniatures, and a single column of oriental alabaster about ten feet in height,

Lucido e terso, e bianco, più che latte.

I put my guide's patience to the proof, by lingering to admire the column and cabinets. At last, the musk with which they are impregnated, obliged me to desist, and I moved on to a suite of saloons, with low arched roofs, glittering with arabesque, in azure and gold. Several me-

dallions appear amongst the wreaths of foliage, tolerably well painted, with representations of splendid feasts and tournaments for which Florence was once so famous.

A vast collection of small pictures, most of them Flemish, covers the walls of these apartments. But nothing struck me more than a Medusa's head by Leonardo da Vinci. It appears just severed from the body and cast on the damp pavement of a cavern: a deadly paleness covers the countenance, and the mouth exhales a pestilential vapour; the snakes which fill almost the whole picture, beginning to untwist their folds; one or two seemed already crept away, and crawling up the rock in company with toads and other venomous reptiles.

Here are a great many Polembergs: one in particular, the strangest I ever beheld. Instead of those soft scenes of woods and waterfalls he is in general so fond of representing, he has chosen for his subject Virgil ushering Dante into the regions of eternal punishment, amidst the ruins of flaming edifices that glare across the infernal waters. These mournful towers harbour innumerable shapes, all busy in preying upon the damned. One capital devil, in the form of

an enormous lobster, seems very strenuously employed in mumbling a miserable mortal, who sprawls, though in vain, to escape from his claws. This performance, whimsical as it is, retains all that softness of tint and delicacy of pencil for which Polemberg is so renowned.

Had not the subject so palpably contradicted the painter's choice, I should have passed over this picture, like a thousand more, and have brought you immediately to the tribune. Need I say I was spell-bound the moment I set my feet within it, and saw full before me the Venus de Medicis? The warm ivory hue of the original marble is a beauty no copy has ever imitated, and the softness of the limbs exceeded the liveliest idea I had formed to myself of their perfection.

When I had taken my eyes reluctantly away from this beautiful object, I cast them upon a Morpheus of white marble, which lies slumbering at the feet of the goddess in the form of a graceful child. A dormant lion serves him for a pillow; two ample wings, carved with the utmost delicacy, are gathered under him; two others, budding from his temples, half-concealed by a flow of lovely ringlets. His languid hands scarcely

hold a bunch of poppies: near him creeps a lizard, just yielding to his influence. Nothing can be more just than the expression of sleep in the countenance of the little divinity. His lion too is perfectly lulled, and rests his muzzle upon his fore paws as quiet as a domestic spaniel. My ill-humour at seeing this deity so grossly sculptured in the gallery, was dissipated by the gracefulness of his appearance in the tribune. I was now contented, for the artist had realized my ideas; and, if I may venture my opinion, sculpture never arrived to higher perfection, and, at the same time, kept more justly within its province. Sleeping figures with me always produce the finest illusion; but when I see an archer in the very act of discharging his arrow, a dancer with one foot in the air, or a gladiator extending his fist to all eternity, I grow tired, and view such wearisome attitudes with infinitely more admiration than pleasure.

The morning was gone before I could snatch myself from the tribune. In my way home, I looked into the cathedral, an enormous fabric, inlaid with the richest marbles, and covered with stars and chequered work, like an old-fashioned cabinet. The architect seems to have turned his

building inside out; nothing in art being more ornamented than the exterior, and few churches so simple within. The nave is vast and solemn, the dome amazingly spacious, with the high altar in its centre, inclosed by a circular arcade near two hundred feet in diameter. There is something imposing in this decoration, as it suggests the idea of a sanctuary, into which none but the holy ought to penetrate. However profane I might feel myself, I took the liberty of entering, and sat down in a niche. Not a ray of light reaches this sacred inclosure, but through the medium of narrow windows, high in the dome, and richly painted. A sort of yellow tint predominates, which gives additional solemnity to the altar, and paleness to the votary before it. I was sensible of the effect, and obtained at least the colour of sanctity.

Having remained some time in this pious hue, I returned home and feasted upon grapes and ortolans with great edification; then walked to one of the bridges across the Arno, and from thence to the garden of Boboli, which lies behind the Grand Duke's palace, stretched out on the side of a mountain. I ascended terrace after terrace, robed by a thick underwood of bay and

myrtle, above which rise several nodding towers, and a long sweep of venerable wall, almost entirely concealed by ivy. You would have been enraptured with the broad masses of shade and dusky alleys that opened as I advanced, with white statues of fauns and sylvans glimmering amongst them; some of which pour water into sarcophagi of the purest marble, covered with antique relievos. The capitals of columns and ancient friezes are scattered about as seats.

On these I reposed myself, and looked up to the cypress groves which spring above the thickets; then, plunging into their retirements, I followed a winding path, which led me by a series of steep ascents to a green platform overlooking the whole extent of wood, with Florence deep beneath, and the tops of the hills which encircle it jagged with pines; here and there a convent, or villa, whitening in the sun. This scene extends as far as the eye can reach.

Still ascending I attained the brow of the eminence, and had nothing but the fortress of Belvedere, and two or three open porticos above me. On this elevated situation, I found several walks of trellis-work, clothed with luxuriant vines. A colossal statue of Ceres, her hands extended in

the act of scattering fertility over the country, crowns the summit.

Descending alley after alley, and bank after bank, I came to the orangery in front of the palace, disposed in a grand amphitheatre, with marble niches relieved by dark foliage, out of which spring cedars and tall aërial cypresses. This spot brought the scenery of an antique Roman garden so vividly into my mind, that, lost in the train of recollections this idea excited, I expected every instant to be called to the table of Lucullus hard by, in one of the porticos, and to stretch myself on his purple triclinias; but waiting in vain for a summons till the approach of night, I returned delighted with a ramble that had led my imagination so far into antiquity.

LETTER XII.

Rambles among the hills.—Excursions with Pacchierotti.—He catches cold in the mountains.—The whole Republic is in commotion, and send a deputation to remonstrate with the Singer on his imprudence.—The Conte Nobili.—Hill scenery.—Princely Castle and Gardens of the Garzoni Family.—Colossal Statue of Fame.—Grove of Ilex.—Endless bowers of Vines.—Delightful Wood of the Marchese Mansi.—Return to Lucca.

Lucca, Sept. 25, 1780.

You ask me how I pass my time. Generally upon the hills, in wild spots where the arbutus flourishes; from whence I may catch a glimpse of the distant sea; my horse tied to a cypress, and myself cast upon the grass, like Palmerin of Oliva, with a tablet and pencil in my hand, a basket of grapes by my side, and a crooked stick to shake down the chestnuts. I have bidden adieu, several days ago, to the visits, dinners, conversazioni, and glories of the town, and only

go thither in an evening, just time enough for the grand march which precedes Pacchierotti in Quinto Fabio. Sometimes he accompanies me in my excursions, to the utter discontent of the Lucchese, who swear I shall ruin their Opera, by leading him such extravagant rambles amongst the mountains, and exposing him to the inclemency of winds and showers. One day they made a vehement remonstrance, but in vain; for the next, away we trotted over hill and dale, and stayed so late in the evening, that a cold and hoarseness were the consequence.

The whole republic was thrown into commotion, and some of its prime ministers were deputed to harangue Pacchierotti upon the rides he had committed. Had the safety of their mighty state depended upon this imprudent excursion, they could not have vociferated with greater violence. You know, I am rather energetic, and, to say truth, I had very nearly got into a scrape of importance, and drawn down the execrations of the Gonfalonier and all his council upon my head by openly declaring our intention of taking, next morning, another ride over the rocks, and absolutely losing ourselves in the clouds which veil their acclivities. These ter-

rible threats were put into execution, and yesterday we made a tour of about thirty miles upon the high lands, and visited a variety of castles and palaces.

The Conte Nobili, a noble Lucchese, born in Flanders and educated at Paris, was our conductor. He possesses great elegance of imagination, and a degree of sensibility rarely met with. The way did not appear tedious in such company. The sun was tempered by light clouds, and a soft autumnal haze rested upon the hills, covered with shrubs and olives. The distant plains and forests appeared tinted with so deep a blue, that I began to think the azure so prevalent in Velvet Breughel's landscapes is hardly exaggerated.

After riding for six or seven miles along the cultivated levels, we began to ascend a rough slope, overgrown with chestnuts; a great many loose fragments and stumps of ancient pomegranates perplexed our route, which continued, turning and winding through this wilderness, till it opened on a sudden to the side of a lofty mountain, covered with tufted groves, amongst which hangs the princely castle of the Garzoni, on the very side of a precipice.

Alcina could not have chosen a more romantic situation. The garden lies extended beneath, gay with flowers, and glittering with compartments of spar, which, though in no great purity of taste, strikes for the first time with the effect of enchantment. Two large marble basins, with jets-d'eau, seventy feet in height, divide the parterres; from the extremity of which rises a rude cliff, shaded with cedar and ilex, and cut into terraces.

Leaving our horses at the great gate of this magic enclosure, we passed through the spray of the fountains, and mounting an endless flight of steps, entered an alley of oranges, and gathered ripe fruit from the trees. Whilst we were thus employed, the sun broke from the clouds, and lighted up the green of the vegetation; at the same time spangling the waters, which pour copiously down a succession of rocky terraces, and sprinkle the impending citron-trees with perpetual dew. These streams issue from a chasm in the cliff, surrounded by cypresses, which conceal by their thick branches a pavilion with baths. Above arises a colossal statue of Fame, boldly carved, and in the very act of starting from the precipices. A narrow path leads up to

the feet of the goddess, on which I reclined; whilst a vast column of water arching over my head, fell, without even wetting me with its spray, into the depths below.

I could hardly prevail upon myself to abandon this cool recess, which the fragrance of bay and orange, maintained by constant showers, rendered uncommonly luxurious. At last I consented to move on, through a dark walk of ilex, which, to the credit of Signor Garzoni be it spoken, is suffered to grow as wild as it pleases. This grove is suspended on the mountain side, whose summit is clothed with a boundless wood of olives, and forms, by its willowy colour, a striking contrast with the deep verdure of its base.

After resting a few moments in the shade, we proceeded to a long avenue, bordered by aloes in bloom, forming majestic pyramids of flowers thirty feet high. This led us to the palace, which was soon run over. Then, mounting our horses, we wound amongst sunny vales, and inclosures with myrtle hedges, till we came to a rapid steep. We felt the heat most powerfully in ascending it, and were glad to take refuge under a continued bower of vines, which runs

for miles along its summit. These arbours afforded us both shade and refreshment; I fell upon the clusters which formed our ceiling, like a native of the north, unused to such luxuriance: one of those Goths, Gray so poetically describes, who

> Scent the new fragrance of the breathing rose,
> And quaff the pendent vintage as it grows.

I wish you had journeyed with us under this fruitful canopy, and observed the partial sunshine through its transparent leaves, and the glimpses of the blue sky it every now and then admitted. I say only every now and then, for in most places a sort of verdant gloom prevailed, exquisitely agreeable in so hot a day.

But such luxury did not last, you may suppose, for ever. We were soon forced from our covert, and obliged to traverse a mountain exposed to the sun, which had dispersed every cloud, and shone with intolerable brightness. On the other side of this extensive eminence lies a pastoral hillock, surrounded by others, woody and irregular. Wide vineyards and fields of Indian corn lay between, across which the Conte Nobili conducted us to his house, where we found prepared a very comfortable dinner. We drank

the growth of the spot, and defied the richest wines of Constantia to exceed it.

Afterwards, retiring into a wood of the Marchese Mansi, with neat pebble walks and trickling rivulets, we took coffee and loitered till sunset. It was then time to return, as the mists were beginning to rise from the valleys. The calm and silence of evening threw us into our reveries. We went pacing along heedlessly, just as our horses pleased, without hearing any sound but their steps.

Between nine and ten we entered the gates of Lucca. Pacchierotti coughed, and half its inhabitants wished us at the devil.

LETTER XIII.

Set out for Pisa.—The Duomo.—Interior of the Cathedral.—The Campo Santo.—Solitude of the streets at midday.—Proceed to Leghorn.—Beauty of the road.—Tower of the Fanale.

Leghorn, October 2nd, 1780.

This morning we set out for Pisa. No sooner had we passed the highly cultivated garden-grounds about Lucca than we found ourselves in narrow roads, shut in by vines and grassy banks of canes and osiers, rising high above our carriage and waving their leaves in the air. Through the openings which sometimes intervened we discovered a variety of hillocks clothed with shrubs, ruined towers looking out of the bushes, not one without a romantic tale attending it.

This sort of scenery lasted till, passing the baths, we beheld Pisa rising from an extensive plain, the most open we had as yet seen in Italy, crossed by an aqueduct. We were set

down immediately before the Duomo, which stands insulated in a vast green area, and is perhaps the most curious edifice my eyes ever viewed. Do not ask of what shape or architecture; it is almost impossible to tell, so great is the confusion of ornaments. The dome gives the mass an oriental appearance, which helped to bewilder me; in short, I have dreamed of such buildings, but little thought they existed. On one side you survey the famous tower, as perfectly awry as I expected; on the other the baptistery, a circular edifice distinct from the church and right opposite its principal entrance, crowded with sculptures and topped by the strangest of cupolas.

Having indulged our curiosity with this singular prospect for some moments, we entered the cathedral and admired the stately columns of porphyry and of the rarest marbles, supporting a roof which, like the rest of the building, shines with gold. A pavement of the brightest mosaic completes its magnificence: all around are sculptures by Michael Angelo Buonarroti, and paintings by the most distinguished artists. We examined them with due attention, and then walked down the nave and remarked the strik-

ing effect of the baptistery, seen in perspective through the bronze portals, which you know, I suppose, are covered with relievos of the finest workmanship. These noble valves were thrown wide open, and we passed between them to the baptistery, where stands an alabaster font, constructed after the primitive ritual and exquisitely wrought.

Our next object was the Campo Santo, which forms one side of the area in which the cathedral is situated. The walls, and Gothic tabernacle above the entrance, rising from the level turf and preserving a neat straw colour, appear as fresh as if built within the present century. Our guide unlocking the gates, we entered a spacious cloister, forming an oblong quadrangle, which encloses the sacred earth of Jerusalem, conveyed hither about the period of the crusades, the days of Pisanese prosperity. The holy mould produces a rampant crop of weeds, but none are permitted to spring from the pavement, which is entirely composed of tombs with slabs, smoothly laid and covered with monumental inscriptions. Ranges of slender pillars, formed of the whitest marble and glistening in the sun, support the arcade of the cloister,

which is carved with innumerable stars and roses, partly Gothic and partly Saracenial. Strange paintings of hell and the devil, mostly taken from Dante's rhapsodies, cover the walls of these fantastic galleries, attributed to the venerable Giotto and Bufalmacco, whom Boccaccio mentions in his Decamerone.

Beneath, along the base of the columns, are placed, to my no small surprise, rows of pagan sarcophagi ; I could not have supposed the Pisanese sufficiently tolerant to admit profane sculptures within such consecrated precincts. However, there they are, as well as fifty other contradictory ornaments.

I was quite seized by the strangeness of the place, and paced fifty times round and round the cloisters, discovering at every time some odd novelty. When tired, I seated myself on a fair slab of *giallo antico*, that looked a little cleaner than its neighbours (which I only mention to identify the precise point of view), and looking through the filigreed tracery of the arches observed the domes of the cathedral, cupola of the baptistery, and roof of the leaning tower rising above the leads, and forming the strangest assemblage of pinnacles perhaps in

Europe. The place is neither sad nor solemn; the arches are airy, the pillars light, and there is so much caprice, such an exotic look in the whole scene, that without any violent effort of fancy one might imagine one's self in fairy land. Every object is new, every ornament original; the mixture of antique sarcophagi with Gothic sepulchres, completes the vagaries of the prospect, to which, one day or other, I think of returning, to hear visionary music and commune with sprites, for I shall never find in the whole universe besides so whimsical a theatre.

The heat was so powerful that all the inhabitants of Pisa showed their wisdom by keeping within doors. Not an animal appeared in the streets, except five camels laden with water, stalking along a range of garden walls and pompous mansions, with an awning before every door. We were obliged to follow their steps, at least a quarter of a mile, before we reached our inn. Ice was the first thing I sought after, and when I had swallowed an unreasonable portion, I began not to think quite so much of the deserts of Africa, as the heat and the camels induced me to do a moment ago.

Early in the afternoon, we proceeded to Leg-

horn through a wild tract of forest, somewhat in the style of our English parks. The trees in some places formed such shady arbours, that we could not resist the desire of walking beneath them, and were well rewarded; for after struggling through a rough thicket, we entered a lawn hemmed in by oaks and chestnuts, which extends several leagues along the coast and conceals the prospect of the ocean; but we heard its murmurs.

Nothing could be smoother or more verdant than the herbage, which was sprinkled with daisies and purple crocuses as in the month of May. I felt all the genial sensations of Spring steal into my bosom, and was greatly delighted upon discovering vast bushes of myrtle in the fullest and most luxuriant bloom. The softness of the air, the sound of the distant surges, the evening gleams, and repose of the landscape, quieted the tumult of my spirits, and I experienced the calm of my infant hours. I lay down in the open turf-walks between the shrubberies, and during a few moments had forgotten every care; but when I began to enquire into my happiness, I found it vanish. I felt myself without those I love most, in situations they would have warmly admired,

and without them these pleasant lawns and woodlands looked pleasant in vain.

We had not left this woody region far behind, when the Fanale began to lift itself above the horizon—the very tower you have so often mentioned; the sky and ocean glowing with amber light, and the ships out at sea appearing in a golden haze, of which we have no conception in our northern climates. Such a prospect, together with the fresh gales from the Mediterranean, charmed me; I hurried immediately to the port and sat on a reef of rocks, listening to the waves that broke amongst them.

LETTER XIV.

The Mole at Leghorn.—Coast scattered over with Watch-towers.—Branches of rare Coral unexpectedly acquired.

October 3rd, 1780.

I WENT, as you would have done, to walk on the mole as soon as the sun began to shine upon it. Its construction you are no stranger to; therefore I think I may spare myself the trouble of saying anything about it, except that the port which it embraces is no longer crowded. Instead of ten ranks of vessels there are only three, and those consist chiefly of Corsican galleys, that look as poor and tattered as their masters. Not much attention did I bestow upon such objects, but, taking my seat at the extremity of the quay, surveyed the smooth plain of ocean, the coast scattered over with watch towers, and the rocky isle of Gorgona, emerging from the morning mists, which still lingered upon the horizon.

Whilst I was musing upon the scene, and calling up all that train of ideas before my imagination, which pleased your own upon beholding it, an ancient figure, with a beard that would have suited a sea-god, stepped out of a boat, and tottering up the steps of the quay, presented himself before me with a basket in his hand. He stayed dripping a few moments before he pronounced a syllable, and when he began his discourse, I was in doubt whether I should not have moved off in a hurry, there was something so wan and singular in his countenance. Except this being, no other was visible for a quarter of a mile at least. I knew not what strange adventure I might be upon the point of commencing, or what message I was to expect from the submarine divinities. However, after all my conjectures, the figure turned out to be no other than an old fisherman, who having picked up a few branches of the rarest species of coral, offered them to sale. I eagerly made the purchase, and thought myself a favourite of Neptune, since he allowed me to acquire, with such facility, some of his most beautiful ornaments.

My bargain thus expeditiously concluded, I ran along the quay with my basket of coral, and,

taking boat, was rowed back to the gate of the port. The carriage waited there; I shut myself up in the grateful shade of green blinds, and was driven away at a rate that favoured my impatience. We bowled smoothly over the lawns described in my last letter, amongst myrtles in flower, that would have done honour to the island of Juan Fernandez.

Arrived at Pisa, I scarcely allowed myself a moment to revisit the Campo Santo, but hurried on to Lucca, and threw the whole idle town into a stare by my speedy return.

LETTER XV.

Florence again.—Palazzo Vecchio.—View on the Arno.—Sculptures by Cellini and John of Bologna.—Contempt shown by the Austrians to the memory of the House of Medici.—Evening visit to the Garden of Boboli.—The Opera.—Miserable Singing.—A Neapolitan Duchess.

Florence, October 5th, 1780.

It was not without regret that I forced myself from Lucca. We had all the same road to go over again, that brought us to this important republic, but we broke down by way of variety. The wind was chill, the atmosphere damp and clogged with unwholesome vapours, through which we were forced to walk for a league, whilst our chaise lagged after us.

Taking shelter in a miserable cottage, we remained shivering and shaking till the carriage was in some sort of order, and then proceeded so slowly that we did not arrive at Florence till late in the evening, and took possession of an apart-

ment over the Arno, which being swollen with rains roared like a mountain torrent. Throwing open my windows, I viewed its agitated course by the light of the moon, half concealed in stormy clouds, which hung above the fortress of the Belvedere. I sat contemplating the effect of the shadows on the bridge, on the heights of Boboli, and the mountain covered with pale olive groves, amongst which a convent is situated, till the moon sank into the darkest quarter of the sky, and a bell began to toll. Its mournful sound filled me with gloomy recollections. I closed the casements, and read till midnight some dismal memoir of conspiracies and assassinations, Guelphs and Ghibelines, the black story of ancient Florence.

October 6th.

Every cloud was dispersed when I arose, and the purity and transparence of the æther added new charms to the picturesque eminences around. I felt quite revived by this exhilarating prospect, and walked in the splendour of sunshine to the porticos beneath the famous gallery, then to an antient castle, raised in the days of the Republic, which fronts the grand piazza. Colossal statues and trophies badly carved in the true

spirit of the antique, are placed before it. On one side a fountain, clung round with antick figures of bronze, by John of Bologna. On the other, three lofty pointed arches, and under one of them the Perseus of Benvenuto Cellini.

Having examined some groups of sculptures by Baccio Bandinelli and other mighty artists, I entered the court of the castle, dark and deep, as if hewn out of a rock, surrounded by a vaulted arcade covered with arabesque ornaments and supported by pillars almost as uncouthly designed as those of Persepolis. In the midst appears a marble fount with an image of bronze, that looks quite strange and cabalistic. I leaned against it to look up to the summits of the walls, which rise to a vast height, from whence springs a slender tower. Above, in the apartments of the castle, are still preserved numbers of curious cabinets, tables of inlaid gems, and a thousand rarities, collected by the house of Medici, and not yet entirely frittered away and disposed of by public sale.

It was not without indignation that I learnt this new mark of contempt which the Austrians bestow on the memory of those illustrious patrons

of the Arts; whom, being unwilling to imitate, they affect to despise as a race of merchants whose example it would be abasing their dignity to follow.

I could have stayed much longer to enjoy the novelty and strangeness of the place; but it was right to pay some compliments of form. That duty over, I dined in peace and solitude, and repaired, as evening drew on, to the thickets of Boboli.

What a serene sky! what mellowness in the tints of the mountains! A purple haze concealed the bases, whilst their summits were invested with saffron light, discovering every white cot and every copse that clothed their declivities. The prospect widened as I ascended the terraces of the garden.

After traversing many long dusky alleys, I reached the opening on the brow of the hill, and seating myself under the statue of Ceres, took a sketch of the huge mountainous cupola of the Duomo, the adjoining lovely tower and one more massive in its neighbourhood, built not improbably in the style of ancient Etruria. Beyond this historic group of buildings a plain stretches

itself far and wide, most richly studded with villas and gardens, and groves of pine and olive, quite to the feet of the mountains.

Having marked the sun's going down and all the soothing effects cast by his declining rays on every object, I went through a plat of vines to a favourite haunt of mine:—a little garden of the most fragrant roses, with a spring under a rustic arch of grotto-work fringed with ivy. Thousands of fish inhabit here, of that beautiful glittering species which comes from China. This golden nation were leaping after insects as I stood gazing upon the deep clear water, listening to the drops that trickle from the cove. Opposite to which, at the end of a green alley, you discover an oval basin, and in the midst of it an antique statue full of that graceful languor so peculiarly Grecian.

Whilst I was musing on the margin of the spring (for I returned to it after casting a look upon the sculpture), the moon rose above the tufted foliage of the terraces, which I descended by several flights of steps, with marble balustrades crowned by vases of aloes.

It was now seven o'clock and all the world were going to my Lord T——'s, who lives in a

fine house all over blue and silver, with stuffed birds, alabaster cupids, and a thousand prettinesses more; but to say truth, neither he nor his abode are worth mentioning. I found a deal of slopping and sipping of tea going forward, and many dawdlers assembled.

As I can say little good of the party, I had better shut the door, and conduct you to the Opera, which is really a striking spectacle. The first soprano put my patience to severe proof, during the few minutes I attended. You never beheld such a porpoise. If these animals were to sing, I should conjecture it would be in his style. You may suppose how often I invoked Pacchierotti, and regretted the lofty melody of Quinto Fabio. Everybody seemed as well contented as if there were no such thing as good singing in the world, except a Neapolitan duchess who delighted me by her vivacity. We took our fill of maledictions, and went home equally pleased with each other for having mutually execrated both singers and audience.

LETTER XVI.

Detained at Florence by reports of the Malaria at Rome.—Ascend one of the hills celebrated by Dante.—View from its brow.—Chapel designed by Michael Angelo.—Birth of a Princess.—The christening.—Another evening visit to the woods of Boboli.

October 22nd, 1780.

They say the air is worse this year at Rome than ever, and that it would be madness to go thither during its malign influence. This was very bad news indeed to one heartily tired of Florence, at least of its society. Merciful powers! what a set harbour within its walls! * * * You may imagine I do not take vehement delight in this company, though very ingenious, praiseworthy, &c. The woods of the Cascini shelter me every morning; and there grows an old crooked ilex at their entrance, twisting round a pine, upon whose branches I sit for hours.

In the afternoon I am irresistibly attracted to

the thickets of Boboli. The other evening, however, I varied my walks, and ascended one of those pleasant hills celebrated by Dante, which rise in the vicinity of the city, and command a variegated scene of towers, villas, cottages, and gardens. On the right, as you stand upon the brow, appears Fiesole with its turrets and white houses, covering a rocky mount to the left, the Val d'Arno lost in the haze of the horizon. A Franciscan convent stands on the summit of the eminence, wrapped up in antient cypresses, which hinder its holy inhabitants from seeing too much of so gay a view. The paved ascent leading up to their abode receives also a shade from the cypresses which border it. Beneath the venerable avenue, crosses with inscriptions are placed at certain distances, to mark the various moments of Christ's passion: as when fainting under his burden he halted to repose himself, or when he met his afflicted mother.

Above, at the end of the perspective, rises a chapel designed by M. A. Buonarotti; further on, an antient church, encrusted with white marble, porphyry, and verd antique. The interior presents a crowded assemblage of ornaments, elaborate mosaic pavements and inlaid work without

end. The high altar is placed in a semicircular recess, which, like the apsis of the church at Torcello, glitters with barbaric paintings on a gold ground, and receives a fervid glow of light from five windows, filled up with transparent marble clouded like tortoiseshell. A smooth polished staircase leads to this mysterious place: another brought me to a subterraneous chapel, supported by confused groups of variegated pillars, just visible by the glimmer of lamps.

Passing on not unawed, I followed some flights of steps, which terminate in the neat cloisters of the convent, in perfect preservation, but totally deserted. Ranges of citron and aloes fill up the quadrangle, whose walls are hung with superstitious pictures most singularly fancied. The Jesuits were the last tenants of this retirement, and seem to have had great reason for their choice. It's peace and stillness delighted me.

Next day I was engaged by a very opposite scene, though much against my will. Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess having produced a princess in the night, everybody put on grand gala in the morning, and I was carried, along with the glittering tide of courtiers, ministers, and ladies, to see the christening. After the

Grand Duke had talked politics for some time, the doors of a temporary chapel were thrown open. Trumpets flourished, processions marched, and the archbishop began the ceremony at an altar of massive gold, placed under a yellow silk pavilion, with pyramids of lights before it. Wax tapers, though it was noon-day, shone in every corner of the apartments. Two rows of pages, gorgeously accoutred, and holding enormous torches, stood on each side his Royal Highness, and made him the prettiest courtesies imaginable, to the sound of an indifferent band of music, though led by Nardini. The poor old archbishop, who looked very piteous and saint-like, led the Te Deum with a quavering voice, and the rest followed him with thoughtless expedition.

The ceremony being despatched, (for his Royal Highness was in a mighty fidget to shrink back into his beloved obscurity,) the crowd dispersed, and I went, with a few others, to dine at my Lord T- -'s.

Evening drawing on, I ran to throw myself once more into the woods of Boboli, and remained till it was night in their recesses. Really this garden is enough to bewilder an

enthusiastic spirit; there is something so solemn in its shades, its avenues, and spires of cypresses. When I had mused for many an interesting hour amongst them, I emerged into the orangery before the palace, which overlooks the largest district of the town, and beheld, as I slowly descended the road which leads up to it, certain bright lights glancing about the cupola of the Duomo and the points of the highest towers. At first I thought them meteors, or those illusive fires which often dance before the eye of my imagination; but soon I was convinced of their reality; for in a few minutes the lantern of the cathedral was lighted up by agents really invisible; whilst a stream of torches ran along the battlements of the old castle which I mentioned in a former letter.

I enjoyed this prospect at a distance: when near, my pleasure was greatly diminished, for half the fish in the town were frying to rejoice the hearts of his Royal Highness's loyal subjects, and bonfires blazing in every street and alley. Hubbubs and stinks of every denomination drove me quickly to the theatre; but that was all glitter and glare. No taste, no arrangement, paltry looking-glasses, and rat's-tail candles.

LETTER XVII.

Pilgrimage to Valombrosa.—Rocky Steeps.—Groves of Pine. Vast Amphitheatre of Lawns and Meadows.—Reception at the Convent.—Wild Glens where the Hermit Gualbertus had his Cell.—Conversation with the holy Fathers. Legendary Tales.—The consecrated Cleft.—The Romitorio.—Extensive View of the Val d'Arno.—Return to Florence.

October 23rd, 1780.

Do you recollect our evening rambles last year, in the valley at F—, under the hill of pines? I remember we often fancied the scene like Valombrosa; and vowed, if ever an occasion offered, to visit its deep retirements. I had put off the execution of this pilgrimage from day to day till the warm weather was gone; and the Florentines declared I should be frozen if I attempted it. Everybody stared last night at the Opera when I told them I was going to bury myself in fallen leaves, and hear no music but their rustlings.

Mr. —— was just as eager as myself to escape the chit-chat and nothingness of Florence; so we finally determined upon our expedition, and mounting our horses, set out this morning, happily without any company but the spirit which led us along. We had need of inspiration, since nothing else, I think, would have tempted us over such dreary, uninteresting hillocks as rise from the banks of the Arno. The hoary olive is their principal vegetation; so that Nature, in this part of the country, seems in a withering decrepit state, and may not unaptly be compared to "an old woman clothed in grey." However, we did not suffer the prospect to damp our enthusiasm, which was the better preserved for Valombrosa.

About half way, our palfreys thought proper to look out for some oats, and I to creep into a sort of granary in the midst of a barren waste, scattered over with white rocks, that reflected more heat than I cared for, although I had been told snow and ice were to be my portion. Seating myself on the floor between heaps of corn, I reached down a few purple clusters of Muscadine grapes, which hung to dry in the ceiling, and amused myself very pleasantly with them

till the horses had finished their meal and it was lawful to set forwards. We met with nothing but rocky steeps shattered into fragments, and such roads as half inclined us to repent our undertaking; but cold was not yet amongst the number of our evils.

At last, after ascending a tedious while, we began to feel the wind blow sharply from the peaks of the mountains, and to hear the murmur of groves of pine. A paved path leads across them, quite darkened by boughs, which meeting over our heads cast a gloom and a chilness below that would have stopped the proceedings of reasonable mortals, and sent them to bask in the plain; but, being not so easily discomfited, we threw ourselves boldly into the forest. It presented that boundless confusion of tall straight stems I am so fond of, and exhaled a fresh aromatic odour that revived my spirits.

The cold to be sure was piercing; but setting that at defiance, we galloped on, and entered a vast amphitheatre of lawns and meadows surrounded by thick woods beautifully green. The steep cliffs and mountains which guard this retired valley are clothed with beech to their very summits; and on their slopes, whose smooth-

ness and verdure equal our English pastures, were dispersed large flocks of sheep. The herbage, moistened by streams which fall from the eminences, has never been known to fade; thus, whilst the chief part of Tuscany is parched by the heats of summer, these upland meadows retain the freshness of spring. I regretted not having visited them sooner, as autumn had already made great havock amongst the foliage. Showers of leaves blew full in our faces as we rode towards the convent, placed at an extremity of the vale and sheltered by firs and chesnuts towering one above another.

Whilst we were alighting before the entrance, two fathers came out and received us into the peace of their retirement. We found a blazing fire, and tables spread very comfortably before it, round which five or six overgrown friars were lounging, who seemed by the sleekness and rosy hue of their countenances not totally to have despised this mortal existence.

My letters of recommendation soon brought the heads of the order about me, fair round figures, such as a Chinese would have placed in his pagoda. I could willingly have dispensed with their attention; yet to avoid this was

scarcely within the circle of possibility. All dinner, therefore, we endured an infinity of nonsensical questions; but as soon as that was over, I lost no time in repairing to the lawns and forests. The fathers made a shift to waddle after, as fast and as complaisantly as they were able, but were soon distanced.

Now I found myself at liberty, and pursued a narrow path overhung by rock, with bushy chesnuts starting from the crevices. This led me into wild glens of beech trees, mostly decayed and covered with moss: several were fallen. It was amongst these the holy hermit Gualbertus had his cell. I rested a moment upon one of their huge branches, listening to the roar of a waterfall which the wood concealed. The dry leaves chased each other down the steeps on the edge of the torrents with hollow rustlings, whilst the solemn wave of the forests above most perfectly answered the idea I had formed of Valombrosa,

——— where the Etrurian shades
High overarch'd embower.

The scene was beginning to take effect, and the genius of Milton to move across his favourite

valley, when the fathers arrived puffing and blowing, by an easier ascent than I knew of.

"You have missed the way," cried the youngest; "the hermitage, with the fine picture by Andrèa del Sarto, which all the English admire, is on the opposite side of the wood: there! don't you see it on the point of the cliff?"

"Yes, yes," said I a little peevishly; "I wonder the devil has not pushed it down long ago; it seems to invite his kick."

"Satan," answered the old Pagod very dryly, "is full of malice; but whoever drinks of a spring which the Lord causeth to flow near the hermitage is freed from his illusions."

"Are they so?" replied I with a sanctified accent, "then I pray thee conduct me thither, for I have great need of such salutary waters."

The youngest father shook his head, as much as to say, "This is nothing more than a heretic's whim."

The senior set forwards with greater piety, and began some legendary tales of the kind which my soul loveth. He pointed to a chasm in the cliff, round which we were winding by a spiral path, where Gualbertus used to sleep,

and, turning himself towards the west, see a long succession of saints and martyrs sweeping athwart the sky, and gilding the clouds with far brighter splendours than the setting sun. Here he rested till his last hour, when the bells of the convent beneath (which till that moment would have made dogs howl had there been any within its precincts) struck out such harmonious jingling that all the country around was ravished, and began lifting up their eyes with singular devotion, when; behold! light dawned, cherubim appeared, and birds chirped although it was midnight. "Alas! alas! what would I not give to witness such a spectacle, and read my prayer-book by the effulgence of opening heaven!"

However, willing to see something at least, I crept into the consecrated cleft and extended myself on its rugged surface. A very penitential couch! but commanding glorious prospects of the world below, which lay this evening in deep blue shade; the sun looking red and angry through misty vapours, which prevented our discovering the Tuscan sea.

Finding the rock as damp as might be expected, I soon shifted my quarters, and followed

the youngest father up to the Romitorio, a snug little hermitage, with a neat chapel, and altar-piece by Andrèa del Sarto, which I should have examined more minutely had not the wild and mountainous forest scenery possessed my whole attention. I just stayed to taste the holy fountain; and then, escaping from my conductors, ran eagerly down the path, leaping over the springs that crossed it, and entered a lawn of the smoothest turf grazed by sheep. Beyond this opening rises a second, hemmed in with thickets; and still higher, a third, whence a forest of young pines spires up into a lofty theatre terminated by peaks, half concealed by a thick mantle of beech tinged with ruddy brown. Pausing in the midst of the lawns, and looking upward to the sweeps of wood which surrounded me, I addressed my orisons to the genius of the place, and prayed that I might once more return into its bosom, and be permitted to bring you along with me, for surely such meads, such groves, were formed for our enjoyment!

This little rite performed, I walked on quite to the extremity of the pastures, traversed a thicket, and found myself on the edge of preci-

pices, beneath whose base the whole Val d'Arno lies expanded. I listened to distant murmurings in the plain, saw wreaths of smoke rising from the cottages, and viewed a vast tract of grey barren country, which evening rendered still more desolate, bounded by the black mountain of Radicofani. Then, turning round, I beheld the whole extent of rock and forest, the groves of beech, and wilds above the convent, glowing with fiery red, for the sun, making a last effort to pierce the vapours, produced this effect; which was the more striking, as the sky was gloomy, and the rest of the prospect of a melancholy blue.

Returning slowly homeward, I marked the warm glow deserting the eminences, and heard the sullen toll of a bell. The young boys of the seminary were moving in a body to their dark enclosure, all dressed in black. Many of them looked pale and wan. I wished to ask them whether the solitude of Valombrosa suited their age and vivacity; but a tall spectre of a priest drove them along like a herd, and presently, the gates opening, I saw them no more.

The night was growing chill, the winds boisterous, and in the intervals of the gusts I had

the addition of a lamentable screech owl to depress my spirits. Upon the whole, I was not at all concerned to meet the fathers, who came out to show me to my room, and entertain me with various gossipings, both sacred and profane, till supper appeared.

Next morning, the Padre Decano gave us chocolate in his apartment; and afterwards led us round the convent; insisting most unmercifully upon our viewing every cell and every dormitory. However, I was determined to make a full stop at the organ, one of the most harmonious I ever played upon; but placed in a deep recess, feebly lighted by lamps, not calculated to inspire triumphant voluntaries. The monks, who had all crowded into the loft, in expectation of brisk jigs and lively overtures, soon retired upon hearing a strain ten times more sorrowful than that to which they were accustomed. I did not lament their departure, but played on till our horses came to the gate. We mounted, wound back through the grove of pines which protect Valombrosa from intrusion, descended the steeps, and, gaining the plains, galloped in a few hours to Florence.

LETTER XVIII.

Cathedral at Sienna.—A vaulted Chamber.—Leave Sienna.—Mountains round Radicofani.—Hunting Palace of the Grand Dukes.—A grim fraternity of Cats.—Dreary Apartment.

Sienna, October 27th, 1780.

HERE my duty of course was to see the cathedral, and I got up much earlier than I wished, in order to perform it. I wonder that our holy ancestors did not choose a mountain at once, scrape it into tabernacles, and chisel it into scripture stories. It would have cost them almost as little trouble as the building in question, which, by many of the Italian devotees to a purer style of architecture, is esteemed a masterpiece of ridiculous taste and elaborate absurdity. The front, encrusted with alabaster, is worked into a million of fretted arches and puzzling ornaments. There are statues without number, and relievos without end or meaning.

The church within is all of black and white marble alternately; the roof blue and gold, with a profusion of silken banners hanging from it; and a cornice running above the principal arcade, composed entirely of bustos representing the whole series of sovereign pontiffs, from the first Bishop of Rome to Adrian the Fourth. Pope Joan they say figured amongst them, between Leo the Fourth and Benedict the Third, till the year 1600, when some authors have asserted she was turned out, at the instance of Clement the Eighth, to make room for Zacharias the First.

I hardly knew which was the nave, or which the cross aisle, of this singular edifice, so perfect is the confusion of its parts. The pavement demands attention, being inlaid so curiously as to represent variety of histories taken from Holy Writ, and designed somewhat in the style of that hobgoblin tapestry which used to bestare the walls of our ancestors. Near the high altar stands the strangest of pulpits, supported by polished pillars of granite, rising from lions' backs, which serve as pedestals. In every corner of the place some glittering chapel or other offends or astonishes you. That, however, of

the Chigi family, it must be allowed, has infinite merit with respect to design and execution; but it wants effect, as seeming out of place in this chaos of caprice and finery.

From the church I entered a vaulted chamber, erected by the Piccolimini's, filled with missals most exquisitely illuminated. The paintings in fresco on the walls are rather barbarous, though executed after the designs of the mighty Raphael; but then we must remember, he had but just escaped from Pietro Perugino.

Not staying long in the Duomo, we left Sienna in good time; and, after being shaken and tumbled in the worst roads that ever pretended to be made use of, found ourselves beneath the rough mountains round Radicofani, about seven o'clock on a cold and dismal evening. Up we toiled a steep craggy ascent, and reached at length the inn upon its summit. My heart sank when I entered a vast range of apartments, with high black raftered roofs, once intended for a hunting palace of the Grand Dukes, but now desolate and forlorn. The wind having risen, every door began to shake, and every board substituted for a window to clatter, as if the severe power who dwells on the topmost peak

of Radicofani, according to its village mythologists, was about to visit his abode.

My only spell to keep him at a distance was kindling an enormous fire, whose charitable gleams cheered my spirits, and gave them a quicker flow. Yet, for some minutes, I never ceased looking, now to the right, now to the left, up at the dark beams, and down the long passages, where the pavement, broken up in several places, and earth newly strewn about, seemed to indicate that something horrid was concealed below.

A grim fraternity of cats kept whisking backwards and forwards in these dreary avenues, which I am apt to imagine is the very identical scene of a sabbath of witches at certain periods. Not venturing to explore them, I fastened my door, pitched my bed opposite the hearth which glowed with embers, and crept under the coverlids, hardly venturing to go to sleep lest I should be suddenly roused from it by I know not what terrible initiation into the mysteries of the place.

Scarce was I settled, before two or three of the brotherhood just mentioned stalked in at a

little opening under the door. I insisted upon their moving off faster than they had entered, and was surprised, when midnight came, to hear nothing more than their doleful mewings echoed by the hollow walls and arches.

LETTER XIX.

Leave the gloomy precincts of Radicofani and enter the Papal territory.—Country near Aquapendente.—Shores of the Lake of Bolsena.—Forest of Oaks.—Ascend Monte Fiascone.—Inhabited Caverns.—Viterbo.—Anticipations of Rome.

Radicofani, October 28th, 1780.

I BEGIN to despair of magical adventures, since none happened at Radicofani, which Nature seems wholly to have abandoned. Not a tree, not an acre of soil, has she bestowed upon its inhabitants, who would have more excuse for practising the gloomy art than the rest of mankind. I was very glad to leave their black hills and stony wilderness behind, and, entering the Papal territory, to see some shrubs and corn-fields at a distance.

Near Aquapendente, which is situated on a ledge of cliffs mantled with chesnut copses and tufted ilex, the country grew varied and picturesque. St. Lorenzo, the next post, built upon a hill, overlooks the lake of Bolsena, whose

woody shores conceal many ruined buildings. We passed some of them in a retired vale, with arches from rock to rock, and grottos beneath half lost in thickets, from which rise craggy pinnacles crowned by mouldering towers ; just such scenery as Polemberg and Bamboche introduce in their paintings.

Beyond these truly Italian prospects, which a mellow evening tint rendered still more interesting, a forest of oaks presents itself upon the brows of hills, which extends almost the whole way to Monte Fiascone. It was late before we ascended it. The whole country seems full of inhabited caverns, that began as night drew on to shine with fires. We saw many dark shapes glancing before them, and perhaps a subterraneous people like the Cimmerians lurk in their recesses. As we drew near Viterbo, the lights in the fields grew less and less frequent; and when we entered the town, all was total darkness.

To-morrow I hope to pay my vows before the high altar of St. Peter, and tread the Vatican. Why are you not here to usher me into the imperial city: to watch my first glance of the Colisco: and lead me up the stairs of the Capitol ? I shall rise before the sun, that I may see him set from Monte Cavallo.

LETTER XX.

Set out in the dark.—The Lago di Vico.—View of the spacious plains where the Romans reared their seat of empire.—Ancient splendour.—Present silence and desolation.—Shepherd huts.—Wretched policy of the Papal Government.—Distant view of Rome.—Sensations on entering the City.—The Pope returning from Vespers.—St. Peter's Colonnade.—Interior of the Church.—Reveries.—A visionary scheme.—The Pantheon.

Rome, October 29th, 1780.

WE set out in the dark. Morning dawned over the Lago di Vico; its waters of a deep ultramarine blue, and its surrounding forests catching the rays of the rising sun. It was in vain I looked for the cupola of St. Peter's upon descending the mountains beyond Viterbo. Nothing but a sea of vapours was visible.

At length they rolled away, and the spacious plains began to show themselves, in which the most warlike of nations reared their seat of empire. On the left, afar off, rises the rugged chain of Apennines, and on the other side, a shining

expanse of ocean terminates the view. It was upon this vast surface so many illustrious actions were performed, and I know not where a mighty people could have chosen a grander theatre. Here was space for the march of armies, and verge enough for encampments: levels for martial games, and room for that variety of roads and causeways that led from the capital to Ostia. How many triumphant legions have trodden these pavements! how many captive kings! What throngs of cars and chariots once glittered on their surface! savage animals dragged from the interior of Africa: and the ambassadors of Indian princes, followed by their exotic train, hastening to implore the favour of the senate!

During many ages, this eminence commanded almost every day such illustrious scenes; but all are vanished: the splendid tumult is passed away: silence and desolation remain. Dreary flats thinly scattered over with ilex, and barren hillocks crowned by solitary towers, were the only objects we perceived for several miles. Now and then we passed a few black ill-favoured sheep straggling by the way's side, near a ruined sepulchre, just such animals as an ancient would

have sacrificed to the Manes. Sometimes we crossed a brook, whose ripplings were the only sounds which broke the general stillness, and observed the shepherds' huts on its banks, propped up with broken pedestals and marble friezes. I entered one of them, whose owner was abroad tending his herds, and began writing upon the sand and murmuring a melancholy song. Perhaps the dead listened to me from their narrow cells. The living I can answer for: they were far enough removed.

You will not be surprised at the dark tone of my musings in so sad a scene, especially as the weather lowered; and you are well acquainted how greatly I depend upon skies and sunshine. To-day I had no blue firmament to revive my spirits; no genial gales, no aromatic plants to irritate my nerves and lend at least a momentary animation. Heath and a greyish kind of moss are the sole vegetation which covers this endless wilderness. Every slope is strewed with the relics of a happier period; trunks of trees, shattered columns, cedar beams, helmets of bronze, skulls and coins, are frequently dug up together.

I cannot boast of having made any discoveries, nor of sending you any novel intelligence. You

knew before how perfectly the environs of Rome were desolate, and how completely the Papal government contrives to make its subjects miserable. But who knows that they were not just as wretched in those boasted times we are so fond of celebrating? All is doubt and conjecture in this frail existence; and I might as well attempt proving to whom belonged the mouldering bones which lay dispersed around me, as venture to affirm that one age is more fortunate than another. Very likely the poor cottager, under whose roof I reposed, is happier than the luxurious Roman upon the remains of whose palace, perhaps, his shed is raised: and yet that Roman flourished in the purple days of the empire, when all was wealth and splendour, triumph and exultation.

I could have spent the whole day by the rivulet, lost in dreams and meditations; but recollecting my vow, I ran back to the carriage and drove on. The road not having been mended, I believe, since the days of the Cæsars, would not allow our motions to be very precipitate. "When you gain the summit of yonder hill, you will discover Rome," said one of the postilions: up we dragged; no city appeared. "From the next,"

cried out a second; and so on from height to height did they amuse my expectations. I thought Rome fled before us, such was my impatience, till at last we perceived a cluster of hills with green pastures on their summits, inclosed by thickets and shaded by flourishing ilex. Here and there a white house, built in the antique style, with open porticos, that received a faint gleam of the evening sun, just emerged from the clouds and tinting the meads below. Now domes and towers began to discover themselves in the valley, and St. Peter's to rise above the magnificent roofs of the Vatican. Every step we advanced the scene extended, till, winding suddenly round the hill, all Rome opened to our view.

Shall I ever forget the sensations I experienced upon slowly descending the hills, and crossing the bridge over the Tiber; when I entered an avenue between terraces and ornamented gates of villas, which leads to the Porto del Popolo, and beheld the square, the domes, the obelisk, the long perspective of streets and palaces opening beyond, all glowing with the vivid red of sunset? You can imagine how I enjoyed my beloved tint, my favourite hour, sur-

rounded by such objects. You can fancy me ascending Monte Cavallo, leaning against the pedestal which supports Bucephalus; then, spite of time and distance, hurrying to St. Peter's in performance of my vow.

I met the Holy Father in all his pomp returning from vespers. Trumpets flourishing, and a troop of guards drawn out upon Ponte St. Angelo. Casting a respectful glance upon the Moles Adriani, I moved on till the full sweep of St. Peter's colonnade opened upon me. The edifice appears to have been raised within the year, such is its freshness and preservation. I could hardly take my eyes from off the beautiful symmetry of its front, contrasted with the magnificent, though irregular courts of the Vatican towering over the colonnade, till, the sun sinking behind the dome, I ran up the steps and entered the grand portal, which was on the very point of being closed.

I knew not where I was, or to what scene transported. A sacred twilight concealing the extremities of the structure, I could not distinguish any particular ornament, but enjoyed the effect of the whole. No damp air or fœtid exhalation offended me. The perfume of incense was

not yet entirely dissipated. No human being stirred. I heard a door close with the sound of thunder, and thought I distinguished some faint whisperings, but am ignorant whence they came. Several hundred lamps twinkled round the high altar, quite lost in the immensity of the pile. No other light disturbed my reveries but the dying glow still visible through the western windows. Imagine how I felt upon finding myself alone in this vast temple at so late an hour. Do you think I quitted it without some revelation?

It was almost eight o'clock before I issued forth, and, pausing a few minutes under the porticos, listened to the rush of the fountains: then traversing half the town, I believe, in my way to the Villa Medici, under which I am lodged, fell into a profound repose, which my zeal and exercise may be allowed, I think, to have merited.

October 30th.

Immediately after breakfast I repaired again to St. Peter's, which even exceeded the height of my expectations. I could hardly quit it. I wish his Holiness would allow me to erect a little tabernacle within this glorious temple. I should desire no other prospect during the winter; no other sky than the vast arches glowing with

golden ornaments, so lofty as to lose all glitter or gaudiness. But I cannot say I should be perfectly contented, unless I could obtain another tabernacle for you. Thus established, we would take our evening walks on the field of marble; for is not the pavement vast enough for the extravagance of the appellation? Sometimes, instead of climbing a mountain, we should ascend the cupola, and look down on our little encampment below. At night I should wish for a constellation of lamps dispersed about in clusters, and so contrived as to diffuse a mild and equal light. Music should not be wanting: at one time to breathe in the subterraneous chapels, at another to echo through the dome.

The doors should be closed, and not a mortal admitted. No priests, no cardinals: God forbid! We would have all the space to ourselves, and to beings of our own visionary persuasion.

I was so absorbed in my imaginary palace, and exhausted with contriving plans for its embellishment, as scarcely to have spirits left for the Pantheon, which I visited late in the evening, and entered with a reverence approaching to superstition. The whiteness of the dome offended me, for, alas! this venerable temple has been white-

washed. I slunk into one of the recesses, closed my eyes, transported myself into antiquity; then opened them again, tried to persuade myself the Pagan gods were in their niches, and the saints out of the question; was vexed at coming to my senses, and finding them all there, St. Andrew with his cross, and St. Agnes with her lamb, &c. Then I paced disconsolately into the portico, which shows the name of Agrippa on its pediment. Fixed for a few minutes against a Corinthian column, I lamented that no pontiff arrived with victims and aruspices, of whom I might enquire, what, in the name of birds and garbage, put me so terribly out of humour! for you must know I was very near being disappointed, and began to think Piranesi and Paolo Panini had been a great deal too colossal in their representations of this venerable structure. I left the column, walked to the centre of the temple, and there remained motionless as a statue. Some architects have celebrated the effect of light from the opening above, and pretended it to be distributed in such a manner as to give those, who walk beneath, the appearance of mystic beings streaming with radiance. If that were the case! I appeared to be sure a

luminous figure, and never stood I more in need of something to enliven me.

My spirits were not mended upon returning home. I had expected a heap of Venetian letters, but could not discover one. I had received no intelligence from England for many a tedious day; and for aught I can tell to the contrary, you may have been dead these three weeks. I think I shall wander soon in the catacombs, which I try lustily to persuade myself communicate with the lower world; and perhaps I may find some letter there from you lying upon a broken sarcophagus, dated from the realms of Night, and giving an account of your descent into her bosom. Yet, I pray continually, notwithstanding my curiosity to learn what passes in the dark regions beyond the tomb, that you will remain a few years longer on our planet; for what would become of me should I lose sight of you for ever? Stay, therefore, as long as you can, and let us have the delight of dozing a little more of this poor existence away together, and steeping ourselves in pleasant dreams.

LETTER XXI.

Leave Rome for Naples.—Scenery in the vicinity of Rome. Albano.—Malaria.—Veletri.—Classical associations.—The Circean Promontory.--Terracina.—Ruined Palace.—Mountain Groves.—Rock of Circe.—The Appian Way.—Arrive at Mola di Gaieta.—Beautiful prospect.—A Deluge.—Enter Naples by night, during a fearful Storm.—Clear Morning.—View from my window.—Courtly Mob at the Palace.—The Presence Chamber.—The King and his Courtiers.—Party at the House of Sir W. H.—Grand Illumination at the Theatre of St. Carlo.—Marchesi.

November 1st, 1780.

THOUGH you find I am not yet snatched away from the earth, according to my last night's bodings, I was far too restless and dispirited to deliver my recommendatory letters. St. Carlos, a mighty day of gala at Naples, was an excellent excuse for leaving Rome, and indulging my roving disposition. After spending my morning at St. Peter's, we set off about four o'clock, and drove by the Coliseo and a Capuchin convent, whose monks were all busied in preparing the

skeletons of their order, to figure by torch-light in the evening. St. John's of Lateran astonished me. I could not help walking several times round the obelisk, and admiring the noble space in which the palace is erected, and the extensive scene of towers and aquedacts discovered from the platform in front.

We went out at the Porta Appia, and began to perceive the plains which surround the city opening on every side. Long reaches of walls and arches, seldom interrupted, stretch across them. Sometimes, indeed, a withered pine, lifting itself up to the mercy of every blast that sweeps the champagne, breaks their uniformity. Between the aqueducts to the left, nothing but wastes of fern, or tracts of ploughed lands, dark and desolate, are visible, the corn not being yet sprung up. On the right, several groups of ruined fanes and sepulchres diversify the levels, with here and there a garden or woody enclosure. Such objects are scattered over the landscape, which towards the horizon bulges into gentle ascents, and, rising by degrees, swells at length into a chain of mountains, which received the pale gleams of the sun setting in watery clouds.

By this uncertain light we discovered the white buildings of Albano, sprinkled about the steeps. We had not many moments to contemplate them, for it was night when we passed the Torre di mezza via, and began breathing a close pestilential vapour. Half suffocated, and recollecting a variety of terrifying tales about the malaria, we advanced, not without fear, to Veletri, and hardly ventured to fall asleep when arrived there.

November 2nd.

I arose at day-break, and, forgetting fevers and mortalities, ran into a level meadow without the town, whilst the horses were putting to the carriage. Why should I calumniate the pearly transparent air? it seemed at least purer than any I had before inhaled. Being perfectly alone, and not discovering any trace of the neighbouring city, I fancied myself existing in the ancient days of Hesperia, and hoped to meet Picus in his woods before the evening. But, instead of those shrill clamours which used to echo through the thickets when Pan joined with mortals in the chase, I heard the rumbling of our carriage, and the cursing of postilions. Mounting a horse I flew before them, and seemed to catch

inspiration from the breezes. Now I turned my eyes to the ridge of precipices, in whose grots and caverns Saturn and his people passed their life; then to the distant ocean. Afar off rose the cliff, so famous for Circe's incantations, and the whole line of coasts, which was once covered with her forests.

Whilst I was advancing with full speed, the sun-beams began to shoot athwart the mountains, the plains to light up by degrees, and their shrubberies of myrtle to glisten with dew-drops. The sea brightened, and the Circean promontory soon glowed with purple. All day we kept winding through this enchanted country. Towards evening Terracina appeared before us, in a bold romantic scite; house above house, and turret looking over turret, on the steeps of a mountain, inclosed with mouldering walls, and crowned by the ruined terraces of a palace; one of those, perhaps, which the luxurious Romans inhabited during the summer, when so free and lofty an exposition (the sea below, with its gales and murmurs) must have been delightful. Groves of orange and citron hang on the declivity, rough with the Indian fig, whose bright red flowers, illuminated by the sun,

had a magic splendour. A palm-tree, growing on the highest crag, adds not a little to its singular appearance. Being the largest I had yet seen, and clustered with fruit, I climbed up the rocks to take a sketch of it; and looking down upon the beach and glassy plains of ocean, exclaimed with Martial:

> O nemus! O fontes! solidumque madentis arenæ
> Littus, et æquoreis splendidus Anxur aquis!

Glancing my eyes athwart the sea, I fixed them on the rock of Circe, which lies right opposite to Terracina, joined to the continent by a very narrow strip of land, and appearing like an island. The roar of the waves lashing the base of the precipices, might still be thought the howl of savage monsters; but where are those woods which shaded the dome of the goddess? Scarce a tree appears. A few thickets, and but a few, are the sole remains of this once impenetrable vegetation; yet even these I longed to visit, such was my predilection for the spot.

Descending the cliff, and pursuing our route to Mola along the shore, by a grand road formed on the ruins of the Appian Way, we drove under an enormous perpendicular rock, standing detached, like a watch tower, and cut into arsenals

and magazines. Day closed just as we got beyond it, and a new moon gleamed faintly on the waters. We saw fires afar off in the bay, some twinkling on the coast, others upon the waves, and heard the murmur of voices; for the night was still and solemn, like that of Cajetas's funeral. I looked anxiously on a sea, where the heroes of the Odyssey and Æneid had sailed to fulfil their mystic destinies.

Nine struck when we arrived at Mola di Gaeta. The boats were just coming in (whose lights we had seen out upon the main), and brought such fish as Neptune, I dare say, would have grudged Æneas and Ulysses.

November 3rd.

The morning was soft, but hazy. I walked in a grove of orange trees, white with blossoms, and at the same time glowing with fruit. The spot sloped pleasantly toward the sea, and here I loitered till the horses were ready, then set off on the Appian, between hedges of myrtle and aloes. We observed a variety of towns, with battlemented walls and ancient turrets, crowning the pinnacles of rocky steeps, surrounded by wilds, and rude uncultivated mountains. The Liris, now Garigliano, winds its peaceful course

through wide extensive meadows, scattered over with the remains of aqueducts, and waters the base of the rocks I have just mentioned. Such a prospect could not fail of bringing Virgil's panegyric of Italy into my mind:

> Tot congesta manu præruptis oppida saxis
> Fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros.

As soon as we arrived in sight of Capua, the sky darkened, clouds covered the horizon, and presently poured down such deluges of rain as floated the whole country. The gloom was general; Vesuvius disappeared just after we had discovered it. At four o'clock darkness universally prevailed, except when a livid glare of lightning presented momentary glimpses of the bay and mountains. We lighted torches, and forded several torrents almost at the hazard of our lives. The plains of Aversa were filled with herds, lowing most piteously, and yet not half so much scared as their masters, who ran about raving and ranting like Indians during the eclipse of the moon. I knew Vesuvius had often put their courage to proof, but little thought of an inundation occasioning such commotions.

For three hours the storm increased in vio-

lence, and instead of entering Naples on a calm evening, and viewing its delightful shores by moonlight—instead of finding the squares and terraces thronged with people and animated by music, we advanced with fear and terror through dark streets totally deserted, every creature being shut up in their houses, and we heard nothing but driving rain, rushing torrents, and the fall of fragments beaten down by their violence. Our inn, like every other habitation, was in great disorder, and we waited a long while before we could settle in our apartments with any comfort. All night the waves roared round the rocky foundations of a fortress beneath my windows, and the lightning played clear in my eyes.

November 4th.

Peace was restored to nature in the morning, but every mouth was full of the dreadful accidents which had happened in the night. The sky was cloudless when I awoke, and such was the transparence of the atmosphere that I could clearly discern the rocks, and even some white buildings on the island of Caprea, though at the distance of thirty miles. A large window fronts my bed, and its casements being thrown

open, gives me a vast prospect of ocean uninterrupted, except by the peaks of Caprea and the Cape of Sorento. I lay half an hour gazing on the smooth level waters, and listening to the confused voices of the fishermen, passing and repassing in light skiffs, which came and disappeared in an instant.

Running to the balcony the moment my eyes were fairly open (for till then I saw objects, I know not how, as one does in dreams) I leaned over its rails and viewed Vesuvius, rising distinct into the blue æther, with all that world of gardens and casinos which are scattered about its base; then looked down into the street, deep below, thronged with people in holiday garments, and carriages, and soldiers in full parade. The shrubby, variegated shore of Posilipo drew my attention to the opposite side of the bay. It was on those very rocks, under those tall pines, Sannazaro was wont to sit by moonlight, or at peep of dawn, composing his marine eclogues. It is there he still sleeps; and I wished to have gone immediately and strewed coral over his tomb, but I was obliged to check my impatience and hurry to the palace in form and gala.

A courtly mob had got thither upon the same errand, daubed over with lace and most notably be-periwigged. Nothing but bows and salutations were going forward on the staircase, one of the largest I ever beheld, and which a multitude of prelates and friars were ascending with awkward pomposity. I jostled along to the presence chamber, where his Majesty was dining alone in a circular enclosure of fine clothes and smirking faces. The moment he had finished, twenty long necks were poked forth, and it was a glorious struggle amongst some of the most decorated who first should kiss his hand, the great business of the day. Everybody pressed forward to the best of their abilities. His Majesty seemed to eye nothing but the end of his nose, which is doubtless a capital object.

Though people have imagined him a weak monarch, I beg leave to differ in opinion, since he has the boldness to prolong his childhood and be happy, in spite of years and conviction. Give him a boar to stab, and a pigeon to shoot at, a battledore or an angling rod, and he is better contented than Solomon in all his glory, and will never discover, like that sapient sovereign, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

His courtiers in general have rather a barbaric appearance, and differ little in the character of their physiognomics from the most savage nations. I should have taken them for Calmucks or Samoieds, had it not been for their dresses and European finery.

You may suppose I was not sorry, after my presentation was over, to return to Sir W. H.'s, where an interesting group of lovely women, literati and artists, were assembled --Gagliani and Cyrillo, Aprile, Milico, and Deamicis--the determined Santo Marco, and the more nymph-like modest-looking, though not less dangerous, Belmonte. Gagliani happened to be in full story, and vied with his countryman Polichinello, not only in gesticulation and loquacity, but in the excessive licentiousness of his narrations. He was proceeding beyond all bounds of decency and decorum, at least according to English notions, when Lady H.* sat down to the pianoforte. Her plaintive modulations breathed a far dif-

* This excellent and highly cultivated woman died at Naples in August 1782. Had she lived to a later period her example and influence might probably have gone great lengths towards arresting that tide of corruption and profligacy which swept off this ill-fated court to Sicily, and threatened its total destruction.

ferent language. No performer that ever I heard produced such soothing effects; they seemed the emanations of a pure, uncontaminated mind, at peace with itself and benevolently desirous of diffusing that happy tranquillity around it; these were modes a Grecian legislature would have encouraged to further the triumph over vice of the most amiable virtue.

The evening was passing swiftly away, and I had almost forgotten there was a grand illumination at the theatre of St. Carlo. After traversing a number of dark streets, we suddenly entered this enormous edifice, whose seven rows of boxes one above the other blazed with tapers. I never beheld such lofty walls of light, nor so pompous a decoration as covered the stage. Marchesi was singing in the midst of all these splendours some of the poorest music imaginable, with the clearest and most triumphant voice, perhaps, in the universe.

It was some time before I could look to any purpose around me, or discover what animals inhabited this glittering world: such was its size and glare. At last I perceived vast numbers of swarthy ill-favoured beings, in gold and silver raiment, peeping out of their boxes. The court

being present, a tolerable silence was maintained, but the moment his Majesty withdrew (which great event took place at the beginning of the second act) every tongue broke loose, and nothing but buzz and hubbub filled up the rest of the entertainment.

LETTER XXII.

View of the coast of Posilipo.—Virgil's tomb.—Superstition of the Neapolitans with respect to Virgil.—Aerial situation.—A grand scene.

November 6th, 1780.

TILL to-day we have had nothing but rains; the sea covered with mists, and Caprea invisible. Would you believe it? I have not yet been able to mount to St. Elmo and the Capo di Monte, in order to take a general view of the town.

At length a bright gleam of sunshine summoned me to the broad terrace of Chiaja, which commands the whole coast of Posilipo. Insensibly I drew towards it, and (you know the pace I run when out upon discoveries) soon reached the entrance of the grotto, which lay in dark shades, whilst the crags that lower over it were brightly illumined. Shrubs and vines grow luxuriantly in the crevices of the rock; and its fresh yellow colours, variegated with ivy, have a beautiful effect.

To the right, a grove of pines spring from the highest pinnacles: on the left, bay and chesnut conceal the tomb of Virgil placed on the summit of a cliff which impends over the opening of the grotto, and is fringed with vegetation. Beneath are several wide apertures hollowed in the solid stone, which lead to caverns sixty or seventy feet in depth, where a number of peasants, who were employed in quarrying, made a strange but not absolutely unharmonious din with their tools and their voices.

Walking out of the sunshine, I seated myself on a loose stone immediately beneath the first gloomy arch of the grotto, and looking down the long and solemn perspective terminated by a speck of grey uncertain light, venerated a work which some old chroniclers have imagined as ancient as the Trojan war. It was here the mysterious race of the Cimmerians performed their infernal rites, and it was this excavation perhaps which led to their abode.

The Neapolitans attribute a more modern, though full as problematical an origin to their famous cavern, and most piously believe it to have been formed by the enchantments of Virgil, who, as Addison very justly observes, is better

known at Naples in his magical character than as the author of the Æneid. This strange infatuation most probably arose from the vicinity of the tomb in which his ashes are supposed to have been deposited; and which, according to popular tradition, was guarded by those very spirits who assisted in constructing the cave. But whatever may have given rise to these ideas, certain it is they were not confined to the lower ranks alone. King Robert,* a wise though far from poetical monarch, conducted his friend Petrarch with great solemnity to the spot: and, pointing to the entrance of the grotto, very gravely asked him, whether he did not adopt the general belief, and conclude this stupendous passage derived its origin from Virgil's powerful incantations? The answer, I think, may easily be conjectured.

When I had sat for some time, contemplating this dusky avenue, and trying to persuade myself that it was hewn by the Cimmerians, I retreated without proceeding any farther, and followed a narrow path which led me, after some windings and turnings, along the brink of the precipice, across a vineyard, to that retired nook of the rocks which shelters Virgil's tomb, most vener-

* Mem. pour la vie de Petrarque, vol. i. p. 439.

ably mossed over and more than half concealed by bushes and vegetation. The clown who conducted me remained aloof at awful distance, whilst I sat commercing with the manes of my beloved poet, or straggled about the shrubbery which hangs directly above the mouth of the grot.

Advancing to the edge of the rock, I saw crowds of people and carriages, diminished by distance, issuing from the bosom of the mountain and disappearing almost as soon as discovered in the windings of its road. Clambering high above the cavern, I hazarded my neck on the top of one of the pines, and looked contemptuously down on the race of pigmies that were so busily moving to and fro. The sun was fiercer than I could have wished, but the sea-breezes fanned me in my aërial situation, which commanded the grand sweep of the bay, varied by convents, palaces, and gardens mixed with huge masses of rock and crowned by the stately buildings of the Carthusians and fortress of St. Elmo. Add a glittering blue sea to this perspective, with Caprea rising from its bosom and Vesuvius breathing forth a white column of smoke into the æther, and you will then have a scene

upon which I gazed with delight, for more than an hour, almost forgetting that I was perched upon the head of a pine with nothing but a frail branch to uphold me. However, I descended alive, as Virgil's genii, I am resolved to believe, were my protectors.

LETTER XXIII.

A ramble on the shore of Baii.—Local traditions.—Cross the bay.—Fragments of a temple dedicated to Hercules.—Wondrous reservoir constructed for the fleet of Nero.—The Dead Lake.—Wild scene.—Beautiful meadow.—Uncouth rocks.—An unfathomable gulph.—Sadness induced by the wild appearance of the place.—Conversation with a recluse.—Her fearful narration.—Melancholy evening.

November 8th, 1780.

This morning I awoke in the glow of sunshine —the air blew fresh and fragrant—never did I feel more elastic and enlivened. A brisker flow of spirits than I had for many a day experienced, animated me with a desire of rambling about the shore of Baii, and creeping into caverns and subterraneous chambers. Off I set along the Chiaja, and up strange paths which impend over the grotto of Posilipo, amongst the thickets mentioned a letter or two ago; for in my present buoyant humour I disdained ordinary roads, and

would take paths and ways of my own. A society of kids did not understand what I meant by intruding upon their precipices; and scrambling away, scattered sand and fragments upon the good people that were trudging along the pavement below.

I went on from pine to pine and thicket to thicket, upon the brink of rapid declivities. My conductor, a shrewd savage, whom Sir William had recommended to me, cheered our route with stories that had passed in the neighbourhood, and traditions about the grot over which we were travelling. I wish you had been of the party, and sat down by us on little smooth spots of sward, where I reclined, scarcely knowing which way caprice had led me. My mind was full of the tales of the place, and glowed with a vehement desire of exploring the world beyond the grot. I longed to ascend the promontory of Misenus, and follow the same dusky route down which the Sibyl conducted Æneas.

With these dispositions I proceeded; and soon the cliffs and copses opened to views of the Baian sea with the little isles of Niscita and Lazaretto, lifting themselves out of the waters.

Procita and Ischia appeared at a distance invested with that purple bloom so inexpressibly beautiful, and peculiar to this fortunate climate. I hailed the prospect, and blessed the transparent air that gave me life and vigour to run down the rocks, and hie as fast as my savage across the plain to Pozzuoli. There we took bark and rowed out into the blue ocean, by the remains of a sturdy mole: many such, I imagine, adorned the bay in Roman ages, crowned by vast lengths of slender pillars; pavilions at their extremities and taper cypresses spiring above their balustrades: this character of villa occurs very frequently in the paintings of Herculaneum.

We had soon crossed the bay, and landing on a bushy coast near some fragments of a temple which they say was raised to Hercules, advanced into the country by narrow tracks covered with moss and strewed with shining pebbles; to the right and left, broad masses of luxuriant foliage, chesnut, bay and ilex, that shelter the ruins of sepulchral chambers. No parties of smart Englishmen and connoisseurs were about. I had all the land to myself, and mounted its steeps and penetrated into its recesses, with the importance of a discoverer. What a variety of narrow paths,

between banks and shades, did I wildly follow! my savage laughing loud at my odd gestures and useless activity. He wondered I did not scrape the ground for medals, and pocket little bits of plaster, like other inquisitive young travellers that had gone before me.

After ascending some time, I followed him into the wondrous* reservoir which Nero constructed to supply his fleet, when anchored in the neighbouring bay. A noise of trickling waters prevailed throughout this grand labyrinth of solid vaults and arches, that had almost lulled me to sleep as I rested myself on the celandine which carpets the floor; but curiosity urging me forward, I gained the upper air; walked amongst woods a few minutes, and then into grots and dismal excavations (prisons they call them) which began to weary me.

After having gone up and down in this manner for some time, we at last reached an eminence that commanded the Mare Morto, and Elysian fields trembling with reeds and poplars. The Dead Lake, a faithful emblem of eternal tranquillity, looked deep and solemn. A few peasants seemed fixed on its margin, their shadows

* The Piscina mirabilis.

reflected on the water. Turning from the lake I espied a rock at about a league distant, whose summit was clad with verdure, and finding this to be the promontory of Misenus, I immediately set my face to that quarter.

We passed several dirty villages, inhabited by an ill-favoured generation, infamous for depredations and murders. Their gardens, however, discover some marks of industry; the fields are separated by neat hedges of cane, and a variety of herbs and pulses and Indian corn seemed to flourish in the inclosures. Insensibly we began to leave the cultivated lands behind us, and to lose ourselves in shady wilds, which, to all appearance, no mortal had ever trodden. Here were no paths, no inclosures; a primeval rudeness characterized the whole scene.

After forcing our way about a mile, through glades of shrubs and briars, we entered a lawnlike opening at the base of the cliff which takes its name from Misenus. The poets of the Augustan age would have celebrated such a meadow with the warmest raptures, and peopled its green expanse with all the sylvan demi-gods of their beautiful mythology. Here were springs issuing

from rocks of pumice, and grassy hillocks partially concealed by thickets of bay.

> Et circum irriguo surgebant lilia prato
> Candida purpureis mista papaveribus.

But as it is not the lot of human animals to be contented, instead of reposing in the vale, I scaled the rock, and was three parts dissolved in attaining its summit. The sun darted upon my head, I wished to avoid its immediate influence; no tree was near; the pleasant valley lay below at a considerable depth, and it was a long way to descend to it. Looking round and round, I spied something like a hut, under a crag on the edge of a dark fissure. Might I avail myself of its covert? My conductor answered in the affirmative, and added that it was inhabited by a good old woman, who never refused a cup of milk, or slice of bread, to refresh a weary traveller.

Thirst and fatigue urged me speedily down an intervening slope of stunted myrtle. Though oppressed with heat, I could not help deviating a few steps from the direct path to notice the uncouth rocks which rose frowning on every quarter. Above the hut, their appearance was truly formidable, bristled over with sharp-spired

dwarf aloes, such as Lucifer himself might be supposed to have sown. Indeed I knew not whether I was not approaching some gate that leads to his abode, as I drew near a gulph (the fissure lately mentioned) and heard the deep hollow murmurs of the gusts which were imprisoned below. The savage, my guide, shuddered as he passed by to apprise the old woman of my coming. I felt strangely, and stared around me, and but half liked my situation.

In the midst of my doubts, forth tottered the old woman. "You are welcome," said she, in a feeble voice, but a better dialect than I had heard in the neighbourhood. Her look was more humane, and she seemed of a superior race to the inhabitants of the surrounding valleys. My savage treated her with peculiar deference. She had just given him some bread, with which he retired to a respectful distance bowing to the earth. I caught the mode, and was very obsequious, thinking myself on the point of experiencing a witch's influence, and gaining, perhaps, some insight into the volume of futurity. She smiled at my agitation and kept beckoning me into the cottage.

"Now," thought I to myself, "I am upon the verge of an adventure." I saw nothing, however, but clay walls, a straw bed, some glazed earthen bowls, and a wooden crucifix. My shoes were loaded with sand: this my hostess perceived, and immediately kindling a fire in an inner part of the hovel, brought out some warm water to refresh my feet, and set some milk and chesnuts before me. This patriarchal attention was by no means indifferent after my tiresome ramble. I sat down opposite to the door which fronted the unfathomable gulph; beyond appeared the sea, of a deep cerulean, foaming with waves. The sky also was darkening apace with storms. Sadness came over me like a cloud, and I looked up to the old woman for consolation.

"And you too are sorrowful, young stranger," said she, "that come from the gay world! how must I feel, who pass year after year in these lonely mountains?" I answered that the weather affected me, and my spirits were exhausted by the walk.

All the while I spoke she looked at me with such a melancholy earnestness that I asked the

cause, and began again to imagine myself in some fatal habitation,

Where more is meant than meets the ear.

"Your features," said she, "are wonderfully like those of an unfortunate young person, who, in this retirement . . . . ." The tears began to fall as she pronounced these words; my curiosity was fired. "Tell me," continued I, "what you mean? who was this youth for whom you are so interested? and why did he seclude himself in this wild region? Your kindness to him might no doubt have alleviated, in some measure, the horrors of the place; but may God defend me from passing the night near such a gulph! I would not trust myself in a despairing moment."

"It is," said she, "a place of horrors. I tremble to relate what has happened on this very spot; but your manner interests me, and though I am little given to narrations, for once I will unlock my lips concerning the secrets of yonder fatal chasm.

"I was born in a distant part of Italy, and have known better days. In my youth fortune smiled upon my family, but in a few years they withered away; no matter by what accident. I am not going to talk much of myself.

Have patience a few moments! A series of unfortunate events reduced me to indigence, and drove me to this desert, where, from rearing goats and making their milk into cheese, by a different method than is common in the Neapolitan state, I have, for about thirty years, prolonged a sorrowful existence. My silent grief and constant retirement had made me appear to some a saint, and to others a sorceress. The slight knowledge I have of plants has been exaggerated, and, some years back, the hours I gave up to prayer, and the recollection of former friends, lost to me for ever! were cruelly intruded upon by the idle and the ignorant. But soon I sank into obscurity: my little recipes were disregarded, and you are the first stranger who, for these twelve months past, has visited my abode. Ah, would to God its solitude had ever remained inviolate!

"It is now three and twenty years," and she looked upon some characters cut on the planks of the cottage, "since I was sitting by moonlight, under that cliff you view to the right, my eyes fixed on the ocean, my mind lost in the memory of my misfortunes, when I heard a step, and starting up, a figure stood before

me. It was a young man, in a rich habit, with streaming hair, and looks that bespoke the utmost terror. I knew not what to think of this sudden apparition. 'Mother,' said he with faltering accents, 'let me rest under your roof; and deliver me not up to those who thirst after my blood. Take this gold; take all, all!'

"Surprise held me speechless; the purse fell to the ground; the youth stared wildly on every side: I heard many voices beyond the rocks; the wind bore them distinctly, but presently they died away. I took courage, and assured the youth my cot should shelter him. 'Oh! thank you, thank you!' answered he, and pressed my hand. He shared my scanty provision.

"Overcome with toil (for I had worked hard in the day) sleep closed my eyes for a short interval. When I awoke the moon was set, but I heard my unhappy guest sobbing in darkness. I disturbed him not. Morning dawned, and he was fallen into a slumber. The tears bubbled out of his closed eyelids, and coursed one another down his wan cheeks. I had been too wretched myself not to respect the sorrows of another: neglecting therefore my accustomed occupations, I drove away the flies that buzzed

around his temples. His breast heaved high with sighs, and he cried loudly in his sleep for mercy.

"The beams of the sun dispelling his dream, he started up like one that had heard the voice of an avenging angel, and hid his face with his hands. I poured some milk down his parched throat. 'Oh, mother!' he exclaimed, 'I am a wretch unworthy of compassion; the cause of innumerable sufferings; a murderer! a parricide!' My blood curdled to hear a stripling utter such dreadful words, and behold such agonising sighs swell in so young a bosom; for I marked the sting of conscience urging him to disclose what I am going to relate.

"It seems he was of high extraction, nursed in the pomps and luxuries of Naples, the pride and darling of his parents, adorned with a thousand lively talents, which the keenest sensibility conspired to improve. Unable to fix any bounds to whatever became the object of his desires, he passed his first years in roving from one extravagance to another, but as yet there was no crime in his caprices.

"At length it pleased Heaven to visit his family, and make their idol the slave of an un-

bridled passion. He had a friend, who from his birth had been devoted to his interest, and placed all his confidence in him. This friend loved to distraction a young creature, the most graceful of her sex, (as I can witness) and she returned his affection. In the exultation of his heart he showed her to the wretch whose tale I am about to tell. He sickened at her sight. She too caught fire at his glances. They languished—they consumed away—they conversed, and his persuasive language finished what his guilty glances had begun.

"Their flame was soon discovered, for he disdained to conceal a thought, however dishonourable. The parents warned the youth in the tenderest manner; but advice and prudent counsels were to him so loathsome, that unable to contain his rage, and infatuated with love, he menaced the life of his friend as the obstacle of his enjoyment. Coolness and moderation were opposed to violence and frenzy, and he found himself treated with a contemptuous gentleness. Stricken to the heart, he wandered about for some time like one entranced. Meanwhile the nuptials were preparing, and the lovely girl he had perverted found ways to

let him know she was about to be torn from his embraces.

"'He raved like a demoniac, and rousing his dire spirit, applied to a malignant wretch who sold the most inveterate poisons. These he infused into a cup of pure iced water and presented to his friend, and to his own too fond confiding father, who soon after they had drunk the fatal potion began evidently to pine away. He marked the progress of their dissolution with a horrid firmness, he let the moment pass beyond which all antidotes were vain. His friend expired; and the young criminal, though he beheld the dews of death hang on his parent's forehead, yet stretched not forth his hand. In a short space the miserable father breathed his last, whilst his son was sitting aloof in the same chamber.

" The sight overcame him. He felt, for the first time, the pangs of remorse. His agitations passed not unnoticed. He was watched: suspicions beginning to unfold he took alarm, and one evening escaped; but not without previously informing the partner of his crimes which way he intended to flee. Several pursued; but the inscrutable will of Providence blinded their search,

and I was doomed to behold the effects of celestial vengeance.

"Such are the chief circumstances of the tale I gathered from the youth. I swooned whilst he related it, and could take no sustenance. One whole day afterwards did I pray the Lord, that I might die rather than be near an incarnate demon. With what indignation did I now survey that slender form and those flowing tresses, which had interested me before so much in his behalf!

"No sooner did he perceive the change in my countenance, than sullenly retiring to yonder rock he sat careless of the sun and scorching winds; for it was now the summer solstice. He was equally heedless of the unwholesome dews. When midnight came my horrors were augmented; and I meditated several times to abandon my hovel and fly to the next village; but a power more than human chained me to the spot and fortified my mind.

"I slept, and it was late next morning when some one called at the wicket of the little fold, where my goats are penned. I arose, and saw a peasant of my acquaintance leading a female strangely muffled up, and casting her eyes on the

ground. My heart misgave me. I thought this was the very maid who had been the cause of such atrocious wickedness. Nor were my conjectures ill-founded. Regardless of the clown who stood by in stupid astonishment, she fell to the earth and bathed my hand with tears. Her trembling lips with difficulty enquired after the youth; and, as she spoke, a glow of conscious guilt lightened up her pale countenance.

"The full recollection of her lover's crimes shot through my memory. I was incensed, and would have spurned her away; but, she clung to my garments and seemed to implore my pity with a look so full of misery, that, relenting, I led her in silence to the extremity of the cliff where the youth was seated, his feet dangling above the sea. His eye was rolling wildly around, but it soon fixed upon the object for whose sake he had doomed himself to perdition.

"Far be it from me to describe their ecstasies, or the eagerness with which they sought each other's embraces. I indignantly turned my head away; and, driving my goats to a recess amongst the rocks, sat revolving in my mind these strange events. I neglected procuring any provision for my unwelcome guests; and about midnight re-

turned homewards by the light of the moon which shone serenely in the heavens. Almost the first object her beams discovered was the guilty maid sustaining the head of her lover; who had fainted through weakness and want of nourishment. I fetched some dry bread, and dipping it in milk laid it before them. Having performed this duty I set open the door of my hut, and retiring to a neighbouring cavity, there stretched myself on a heap of leaves and offered my prayers to Heaven.

" A thousand fears, till this moment unknown, thronged into my fancy. The shadow of leaves that chequered the entrance to the grot, seemed to assume in my distempered imagination the form of ugly reptiles, and I repeatedly shook my garments. The flow of the distant surges was deepened by my apprehensions into distant groans: in a word, I could not rest; but issuing from the cavern as hastily as my trembling knees would allow, paced along the edge of the precipice. An unaccountable impulse would have hurried my steps, yet such was my terror and shivering, that unable to advance to my hut or retreat to the cavern, I was about to shield myself from the night in a sandy crevice. when a loud

shriek pierced my ear. My fears had confused me; I was in fact near my hovel and scarcely three paces from the brink of the cavern: it was thence the cries proceeded.

"Advancing in a cold shudder to its edge, part of which was newly crumbled in, I discovered the form of the young man suspended by one foot to a branch of juniper that grew several feet down: thus dreadfully did he hang over the gulph from the branch bending with his weight. His features were distorted, his eye-balls glared with agony, and his screams became so shrill and terrible that I lost all power of affording assistance. Fixed, I stood with my eyes riveted upon the criminal, who incessantly cried out, 'O God! O Father! save me if there be yet mercy! save me, or I sink into the abyss!'

"I am convinced he did not see me; for not once did he implore my help. His voice grew faint, and as I gazed intent upon him, the loose thong of leather, which had entangled itself in the branches by which he hung suspended, gave way, and he fell into utter darkness. I sank to the earth in a trance; during which a sound like the rush of pennons assaulted my ear: methought the evil spirit was bearing off his soul; but when

I lifted up my eyes nothing stirred; the stillness that prevailed was awful.

"The moon hanging low over the waves afforded a sickly light, by which I perceived some one coming down that white cliff you see before you; and I soon heard the voice of the young woman calling aloud on her guilty lover. She stopped. She repeated again and again her exclamation; but there was no reply. Alarmed and frantic she hurried along the path, and now I saw her on the promontory, and now by yonder pine, devouring with her glances every crevice in the rock. At length perceiving me, she flew to where I stood, by the fatal precipice, and having noticed the fragments fresh crumbled in, pored importunately on my countenance. I continued pointing to the chasm; she trembled not; her tears could not flow; but she divined the meaning. 'He is lost!' said she; 'the earth has swallowed him! but, as I have shared with him the highest joy, so will I partake his torments. I will follow: dare not to hinder me.'

"Like the phantoms I have seen in dreams, she glanced beside me; and, clasping her hands above her head, lifted a steadfast look on the hemisphere, and viewed the moon with an anxi-

ousness that told me she was bidding it farewell for ever. Observing a silken handkerchief on the ground, with which she had but an hour ago bound her lover's temples, she snatched it up, and imprinting it with burning kisses, thrust it into her bosom. Once more, expanding her arms in the last act of despair and miserable passion, she threw herself, with a furious leap, into the gulph.

To its margin I crawled on my knees, and there did I remain in the most dreadful darkness; for now the moon was sunk, the sky obscured with storms, and a tempestuous blast ranging the ocean. Showers poured thick upon me, and the lightning, in clear and frequent flashes, gave me terrifying glimpses of yonder accursed chasm.

" Stranger, dost thou believe in our Redeemer? in his most holy mother? in the tenets of our faith?" I answered with reverence, but said her faith and mine were different. " Then," continued the aged woman, " I will not declare before a heretic what were the visions of that night of vengeance!" She paused; I was silent.

After a short interval, with deep and frequent

sighs, she resumed her narrative. "Daylight began to dawn as if with difficulty, and it was late before its radiance had tinged the watery and tempestuous clouds. I was still kneeling by the gulph in prayer when the cliffs began to brighten, and the beams of the morning sun to strike against me. Then did I rejoice. Then no longer did I think myself of all human beings the most abject and miserable. How different did I feel myself from those, fresh plunged into the abodes of torment, and driven for ever from the morning!

"Three days elapsed in total solitude: on the fourth, some grave and ancient persons arrived from Naples, who questioned me, repeatedly, about the wretched lovers, and to whom I related their fate with every dreadful particular. Soon after I learned that all discourse concerning them was expressly stopped, and that no prayers were offered up for their souls."

With these words, as well as I recollect, the old woman ended her singular narration. My blood thrilled as I walked by the gulph to call my guide, who stood aloof under the cliffs. He seemed to think, from the paleness of my countenance, that I had heard some gloomy prediction,

and shook his head, when I turned round to bid my old hostess adieu! It was a melancholy evening, and I could not refrain from tears, whilst, winding through the defiles of the rocks, the sad scenes which had passed amongst them recurred to my memory.

Traversing a wild thicket, we soon regained the shore, where I rambled a few minutes whilst the peasant went for the boatmen. The last streaks of light were quivering on the waters when I stepped into the bark, and wrapping myself up in an awning, slept till we reached Puzzoli, some of whose inhabitants came forth with torches to light us home.

LETTER XXIV.

The Tyrol Mountains.—Intense cold.—Delight on beholding human habitations.

Augsburg, 20th January, 1781

FOR these ten days past have I been traversing Lapland: winds whistling in my ears, and cones showering down upon my head from the wilds of pine through which our route conducted us. We were often obliged to travel by moonlight, and I leave you to imagine the awful aspect of the Tyrol mountains buried in snow.

I scarcely ventured to utter an exclamation of surprise, though prompted by some of the most striking scenes in nature, lest I should interrupt the sacred silence that prevails, during winter, in these boundless solitudes. The streams are frozen, and mankind petrified, for aught I know to the contrary, since whole days have we journeyed on without perceiving the slightest hint of their existence.

I never before felt so much pleasure by discovering a smoke rising from a cottage, or hearing a heifer lowing in its stall; and could not have supposed there was so much satisfaction in perceiving two or three fur caps, with faces under them, peeping out of their concealments. I wish you had been with me, exploring this savage region: wrapped up in our bear-skins, we should have followed its secret avenues, and penetrated, perhaps, into some inchanted cave lined with sables, where, like the heroes of northern romances, we should have been waited upon by dwarfs, and sung drowsily to repose. I think it no bad scheme to sleep away five or six years to come, since every hour affairs are growing more and more turbulent. Well, let them! provided we may enjoy, in security, the shades of our thickets.

SECOND VISIT TO ITALY

The following letters, written during a second excursion, are added, on account of their affinity to some of the preceding.

SECOND VISIT TO ITALY

LETTER I.

First day of Summer.—A dismal Plain.—Gloomy entrance to Cologne.—Labyrinth of hideous edifices.—Hotel of Der Heilige Geist.

Cologne, 28th May, 1782.

This is the first day of summer; the oak leaves expand, the roses blow, butterflies are on the wing, and I have spirits enough to write to you. We have had clouded skies this fortnight past, and roads like the slough of Despond. Last Wednesday we were benighted on a dismal plain, apparently boundless. The moon cast a sickly gleam, and now and then a blue meteor glided along the morass which lay before us.

After much difficulty we gained an avenue, and in an hour's time discovered something like a gateway, shaded by crooked elms and crowned by a cluster of turrets. Here we paused and

knocked; no one answered. We repeated our knocks; the gate returned a hollow sound; the horses coughed, their riders blew their horns. At length the bars fell, and we entered.—by what means I am ignorant, for no human being appeared.

A labyrinth of narrow winding streets, dark as the vaults of a cathedral, opened to our view. We kept wandering along, at least twenty minutes, between lofty mansions with grated windows and strange galleries projecting one over another, from which depended innumerable uncouth figures and crosses, in iron-work, swinging to and fro with the wind. At the end of this gloomy maze we found a long street, not fifteen feet wide, I am certain; the houses still loftier than those just mentioned, the windows thicker barred, and the gibbets (for I know not what else to call them) more frequent. Here and there we saw lights glimmering in the highest stories, and arches on the right and left, which seemed to lead into retired courts and deeper darkness.

Along one of these recesses we were jumbled, over such pavement as I hope you may never tread upon; and, after parading round it, went

out at the same arch through which we had entered. This procession seemed at first very mystical, but it was too soon accounted for by our postilions, who confessed they had lost their way. A council was held amongst them in form, and then we struck into another labyrinth of hideous edifices, habitations I will not venture to call them, as not a creature stirred; though the rumbling of our carriages was echoed by all the vaults and arches.

Towards midnight we rested a few minutes, and a head poking out of a casement directed us to the hotel of Der Heilige Geist, where an apartment, thirty feet square, was prepared for our reception.

LETTER II.

Enter the Tyrol.—Picturesque scenery.—Village of Nasseriet. —World of boughs.—Forest huts.—Floral abundance.

Inspruck, June 4, 1782.

No sooner had we passed Fuessen than we entered the Tyrol, a country of picturesque wonders. Those lofty peaks, those steeps of wood I delight in, lay before us. Innumerable clear springs gushed out on every side, overhung by luxuriant shrubs in blossom. The day was mild, though overcast, and a soft blue vapour rested upon the hills, above which rise mountains that bear plains of snow into the clouds.

At night we lay at Nasseriet, a village buried amongst savage promontories. The next morning we advanced, in bright sunshine, into smooth lawns on the slopes of mountains, scattered over with larches, whose delicate foliage formed a light green veil to the azure sky. Flights of

birds were merrily travelling from spray to spray. I ran delighted into this world of boughs, whilst Cozens sat down to draw the huts which are scattered about for the shelter of herds, and discover themselves amongst the groves in the most picturesque manner.

These little edifices are uncommonly neat, and excite those ideas of pastoral life to which I am so fondly attached. The turf from whence they rise is enamelled, in the strict sense of the word, with flowers. Gentians predominated, brighter than ultramarine; here and there auriculas looked out of the moss, and I often reposed upon tufts of ranunculus. Bushes of phillyrea were very frequent, the sun shining full on their glossy leaves. An hour passed away swiftly in these pleasant groves, where I lay supine under a lofty fir, a tower of leaves and branches.

LETTER III.

Rapidity of our drive along the causeways of the Brenta.—Shore of Fusina.—A stormy sky.—Draw near to Venice.—Its deserted appearance.—Visit to Madame de R.—Cesarotti.

Padua, June 11th, 1782.

ONCE more, said I to myself, I shall have the delight of beholding Venice; so got into an open chaise, the strangest curricle that ever man was jolted in, and drove furiously along the causeways by the Brenta, into whose deep waters it is a mercy, methinks, I was not precipitated. Fiesso, the Dolo, the Mira, with all their gardens, statues, and palaces, seemed flying after each other, so rapid was our motion.

After a few hours' confinement between close steeps, the scene opened to the wide shore of Fusina. I looked up (for I had scarcely time to look before) and beheld a troubled sky, shot with vivid red, the Lagunes tinted like the opal,

and the islands of a glowing flame-colour. The mountains of the distant continent appeared of a deep melancholy grey, and innumerable gondolas were passing to and fro in all their blackness. The sun, after a long struggle, was swallowed up in the tempestuous clouds.

In an hour we drew near to Venice, and saw its world of domes rising out of the waters. A fresh breeze bore the toll of innumerable bells to my ear. Sadness came over me as I entered the great canal, and recognised those solemn palaces, with their lofty arcades and gloomy arches, beneath which I had so often sat, the scene of many a strange adventure.

The Venetians being mostly at their villas on the Brenta, the town appeared deserted. I visited, however, all my old haunts in the place of St. Mark, ran up the Campanile, and rowed backwards and forwards, opposite the Ducal Palace, by moon-light. They are building a spacious quay, near the street of the Sclavonians, fronting the island of San Giorgio Maggiore, where I remained alone at least an hour, following the wanderings of the moon amongst mountainous clouds, and listening to the waters dashing against marble steps.

I closed my evening at my friend Madame de Rosenberg's, where I met Cesarotti, who read to us some of the most affecting passages in his Fingal, with all the intensity of a poet, thoroughly persuaded that into his own bosom the very soul of Ossian had been transfused.

Next morning the wind was uncommonly violent for the mild season of June, and the canals much ruffled; but I was determined to visit the Lido once more, and bathe on my accustomed beach. The pines in the garden of the Carthusians were nodding as I passed by in my gondola, which was very poetically buffeted by the waves.

Traversing the desert of locusts,* I hailed the Adriatic, and plunged into its agitated waters. The sea, delightfully cool, refreshed me to such a degree, that, upon my return to Venice, I found myself able to thread its labyrinths of streets, canals, and alleys, in search of amber and oriental curiosities. The variety of exotic merchandise, the perfume of coffee, the shade of awnings, and the sight of Greeks and Asiatics sitting cross-legged under them, made me think myself in the bazaars of Constantinople.

* See Letter VII.

It is certain my beloved town of Venice ever recalls a series of eastern ideas and adventures. I cannot help thinking St. Mark's a mosque, and the neighbouring palace some vast seraglio, full of arabesque saloons, embroidered sofas, and voluptuous Circassians.

LETTER IV.

Excursion to Mirabello.—Beauty of the road thither.—Madame de R.'s wild-looking niece.—A comfortable Monk's nest.

Padua, June 19th, 1782.

THE morning was delightful, and St. Anthony's bells in full chime. A shower which had fallen in the night rendered the air so cool and grateful, that Madame de R. and myself determined to seize the opportunity and go to Mirabello, a country house, which Algarotti had inhabited, situate amongst the Euganean hills, eight or nine miles from Padua.

Our road lay between poplar alleys and fields of yellow corn, overhung by garlands of vine, most beautifully green. I soon found myself in the midst of my favourite hills, upon slopes covered with clover, and shaded by cherry-trees. Bending down their boughs I gathered the fruit, and grew cooler and happier every instant.

We dined very comfortably in a strange hall, where my friend's little wild-looking niece pitched her pianoforte, and sang the voluptuous airs of Bertoni's Armida. That enchantress might have raised her palace in this situation; and, had I been Rinaldo, I certainly should not very soon have abandoned it.

After dinner we drank coffee under some branching lemons, which sprang from a terrace, commanding a boundless scene of towers and villas; tall cypresses and shrubby hillocks rising, like islands, out of a sea of corn and vine.

Evening drawing on, and the breeze blowing fresh from the distant Adriatic, I reclined on a slope, and turned my eyes anxiously towards Venice; then upon some little fields hemmed in by chesnuts, where the peasants were making their hay, and, from thence, to a mountain, crowned by a circular grove of fir and cypress.

In the centre of these shades some monks have a comfortable nest; perennial springs, a garden of delicious vegetables, and, I dare say, a thousand luxuries besides, which the poor mortals below never dream of.

Had it not been late, I should certainly have climbed up to the grove, and asked admittance into its recesses; but having no mind to pass the night in this eyrie, I contented myself with the distant prospect.

LETTER V.

Rome.—Stroll to the Coliseo and the Palatine Mount.—A grand Rinfresco.—The Egyptian Lionesses.—Illuminations.

Rome, 29th June 1782.

It is needless for me to say I wish you with me: you know I do; you know how delightfully we should ramble about Rome together. This evening, instead of parading the Corso with the puppets in blue and silver coats, and green and gold coaches, instead of bowing to Cardinal this, and dotting my head to Abbè t'other, I strolled to the Coliseo and scrambled amongst its arches. Then bending my course to the Palatine Mount, I passed under the Arch of Titus, and gained the Capitol, which was quite deserted, the world, thank Heaven, being all slip-slopping in coffee-houses, or staring at a few painted boards, patched up before the Colonna palace, where, by the by, to-night is a grand *rinfresco* for all the

dolls and doll-fanciers of Rome. I heard their buzz at a distance; that was enough for me!

Soothed by the rippling of waters, I descended the Capitoline stairs, and leaned several minutes against one of the Egyptian lionesses. This animal has no knack at oracles, or else it would have murmured out to me the situation of that secret cave, where the wolf suckled Romulus and his brother.

About nine, I returned home, and am now writing to you like a prophet on the housetop. Behind me rustle the thickets of the Villa Medici; before, lies roof beyond roof, and dome beyond dome: these are dimly discovered; but do not you see the great cupola of cupolas, twinkling with illuminations? The town is real, I am certain; but, surely, that structure of fire must be visionary.

LETTER VI.

The Negroni Garden.—Its solitary and antique appearance.—Stately Porticos of the Lateran.—Dreary Scene.

Rome, 30th June 1782.

As soon as the sun declined I strolled into the Villa Medici; but finding it haunted by pompous people, nay, even by the Spanish Ambassador, and several red-legged Cardinals, I moved off to the Negroni garden. There I found what my soul desired, thickets of jasmine, and wild spots overgrown with bay; long alleys of cypress totally neglected, and almost impassable through the luxuriance of the vegetation; on every side antique fragments, vases, sarcophagi, and altars sacred to the Manes, in deep, shady recesses, which I am certain the Manes must love. The

air was filled with the murmurs of water, trickling down basins of porphyry, and losing itself amongst overgrown weeds and grasses.

Above the wood and between its boughs appeared several domes, and a strange lofty tower. I will not say they belong to St. Maria Maggiore; no, they are fanes and porticos dedicated to Cybele, who delights in sylvan situations. The forlorn air of this garden, with its high and reverend shades, make me imagine it as old as the baths of Dioclesian, which peep over one of its walls.

At the close of day, I repaired to the platform before the stately porticos of the Lateran. There I sat, folded up in myself. Some priests jarred the iron gates behind me. I looked over my shoulder through the portals, into the portico. Night began to fill it with darkness. Upon turning round, the melancholy waste of the Campagna met my eyes, and I wished to go home, but had scarcely the power. A pressure, like that I have felt in horrid dreams, seemed to fix me to the pavement.

I was thus in a manner forced to dwell upon the dreary scene, the long line of aqueducts and lonesome towers. Perhaps the unwholesome

vapours, rising like blue mists from the plains, had affected me. I know not how it was; but I never experienced such strange, such chilling terrors. About ten o'clock, thank God, the spell dissolved, I found my limbs at liberty, and returned home.

LETTER VII.

Naples.—Portici.—The King's Pagliaro and Garden.—Description of that pleasant spot.

Naples, July 8th, 1782.

THE sea-breezes restore me to life. I set the heat of mid-day at defiance, and do not believe in the horrors of the sirocco. I passed yesterday at Portici, with Lady H. The morning, refreshing and pleasant, invited us at an early hour into the open air. We drove, in an uncovered chaise, to the royal Bosquetto: no other unroyal carriage except Sir W.'s being allowed to enter its alleys, we breathed a fresh air, untainted by dust or garlick. Every now and then, amidst wild bushes of ilex and myrtle, one finds a graceful antique statue, sometimes a fountain, and often a rude knoll, where the rabbits sit undisturbed, contemplating the blue glittering bay.

The walls of this shady inclosure are lined with Peruvian aloes, whose white blossoms, scented like those of the magnolia, form the most magnificent clusters. They are plants to salute respectfully as one passes by; such is their size and dignity. In the midst of the thickets stands the King's Pagliaro, in a small garden, with hedges of luxuriant jasmine, whose branches are suffered to flaunt as much as nature pleases.

The morning sun darted his first rays on their flowers just as I entered this pleasant spot. The hut looks as if erected in the days of fairy pastoral life; its neatness is quite delightful. Bright tiles compose the floor; straw, nicely platted, covers the walls. In the middle of the room you see a table spread with a beautiful Persian carpet; at one end, four niches with mattresses of silk, where the King and his favourites repose after dinner; at the other, a white marble basin. Mount a little staircase, and you find yourself in another apartment, formed by the roof, which being entirely composed of glistening straw, casts that comfortable yellow glow I admire. From the windows you look into the garden, not flourished over with parterres, but divided into

plats of fragrant herbs and flowers, with here and there a little marble table, or basin of the purest water.

These sequestered inclosures are cultivated with the greatest care, and so frequently watered, that I observed lettuces, and a variety of other vegetables, as fresh as in our green England.

GRANDE ÇHARTREUSE.

GRANDE CHARTREUSE.

LETTER I.

Determination to visit the Grande Chartreuse.—Reach the Village of Les Echelles.—Gloomy region. — The Torrent. — Entrance of the Desert. — Portal of the consecrated Enclosure. — Dark Woods and Caverns. — Crosses. — Inscriptions.

Gray's sublime Ode on the Grande Chartreuse had sunk so deeply into my spirit that I could not rest in peace on the banks of the Leman Lake till I had visited the scene from whence he caught inspiration. I longed to penetrate these sacred precincts, to hear the language of their falling waters, and throw myself into the gloom of their forests: no object of a worldly nature did I allow to divert my thoughts, neither the baths of Aix, nor the habitation of the too indulgent Madame de Warens (held so holy by Rousseau's worshippers), nor the magnificent road cut by

Charles Emanuel of Savoy through the heart of a rocky mountain. All these points of attraction, so interesting to general travellers, were lost upon me, so totally was I absorbed in the anticipation of the pilgrimage I had undertaken.

Mr. Lettice, who shared all my sentiments of admiration for Gray, and eagerness to explore the region he had described in his short and masterly letters with such energy, felt the same indifference as myself to commonplace scenery.

The twilight was beginning to prevail when we reached Les Echelles, a miserable village, with but few of its chimneys smoking, situated at the base of a mountain, round which had gathered a concourse of red and greyish clouds. I was heartily glad to leave these forlorn and wretched quarters at the first dawn of the next day. We were now obliged to abandon our coach; and taking horse, proceeded towards the mountains, which, with the valleys between them, form what is called the Desert of the Carthusians.

In an hour's time we were drawing near, and could discern the opening of a narrow valley overhung by shaggy precipices, above which rose lofty peaks, covered to their very summits with wood. We could now distinguish the roar

of torrents, and a confusion of strange sounds, issuing from dark forests of pine. I confess at this moment I was somewhat startled. I experienced some disagreeable sensations, and it was not without a degree of unwillingness that I left the gay pastures and enlivening sunshine, to throw myself into this gloomy and disturbed region. How dreadful, thought I, must be the despair of those, who enter it, never to return!

But after the first impression was worn away all my curiosity redoubled; and desiring our guide to put forward with greater speed, we made such good haste, that the meadows and cottages of the plain were soon left far behind, and we found ourselves on the banks of the torrent, whose agitation answered the ideas which its sounds had inspired. Into the midst of these troubled waters we were obliged to plunge with our horses, and, when landed on the opposite shore, were by no means displeased to have passed them.

We had now closed with the forests, over which the impending rocks diffused an additional gloom. The day grew obscured by clouds, and the sun no longer enlightened the distant plains, when we began to ascend towards the entrance

of the desert, marked by two pinnacles of rock far above us, beyond which a melancholy twilight prevailed. Every moment we approached nearer and nearer to the sounds which had alarmed us; and, suddenly emerging from the woods, we discovered several mills and forges, with many complicated machines of iron, hanging over the torrent, that threw itself headlong from a cleft in the precipices; on one side of which I perceived our road winding along, till it was stopped by a venerable gateway. A rock above one of the forges was hollowed into the shape of a round tower, of no great size, but resembling very much an altar in figure; and, what added greatly to the grandeur of the object, was a livid flame continually palpitating upon it, which the gloom of the valley rendered perfectly discernible.

The road, at a small distance from this remarkable scene, was become so narrow, that, had my horse started, I should have been but too well acquainted with the torrent that raged beneath; dismounting, therefore, I walked towards the edge of the great fall, and there, leaning on a fragment of cliff, looked down into the foaming gulph, where the waters were hurled along over

broken pines, pointed rocks, and stakes of iron. Then, lifting up my eyes, I took in the vast extent of the forests, frowning on the brows of the mountains.

It was here first I felt myself seized by the genius of the place, and penetrated with veneration of its religious gloom; and, I believe, uttered many extravagant exclamations; but, such was the dashing of the wheels, and the rushing of the waters at the bottom of the forges, that what I said was luckily undistinguishable.

I was not yet, however, within the consecrated enclosure, and therefore not perfectly contented; so, leaving my fragment, I paced in silence up the path, which led to the great portal. When we arrived before it, I rested a moment, and looking against the stout oaken gate, which closed up the entrance to this unknown region, felt at my heart a certain awe, that brought to my mind the sacred terror of those, in ancient days going to be admitted into the Eleusinian mysteries.

My guide gave two knocks; after a solemn pause, the gate was slowly opened, and all our horses having passed through it, was again carefully closed.

I now found myself in a narrow dell, surrounded on every side by peaks of the mountains, rising almost beyond my sight, and shelving downwards till their bases were hidden by the foam and spray of the water, over which hung a thousand withered and distorted trees. The rocks seemed crowding upon me, and, by their particular situation, threatened to obstruct every ray of light; but, notwithstanding the menacing appearance of the prospect, I still kept following my guide, up a craggy ascent, partly hewn through a rock, and bordered by the trunks of ancient fir-trees, which formed a fantastic barrier, till we came to a dreary and exposed promontory, impending directly over the dell.

The woods are here clouded with darkness, and the torrents rushing with additional violence are lost in the gloom of the caverns below; every object, as I looked downwards from my path, that hung midway between the base and the summit of the cliff, was horrid and woeful. The channel of the torrent sunk deep amidst frightful crags, and the pale willows and wreathed roots spreading over it, answered my ideas of those dismal abodes, where, according to the druidical mythology, the ghosts of conquered

warriors were bound. I shivered whilst I was regarding these regions of desolation, and, quickly lifting up my eyes to vary the scene, I perceived a range of whitish cliffs glistening with the light of the sun, to emerge from these melancholy forests.

On a fragment that projected over the chasm, and concealed for a moment its terrors, I saw a cross, on which was written VIA COELI. The cliffs being the heaven to which I now aspired, we deserted the edge of the precipice, and ascending, came to a retired nook of the rocks, in which several copious rills had worn irregular grottoes. Here we reposed an instant, and were enlivened with a few sunbeams, piercing the thickets and gilding the waters that bubbled from the rock, over which hung another cross, inscribed with this short sentence, which the situation rendered wonderfully pathetic, O SPES UNICA! the fervent exclamation of some wretch disgusted with the world whose only consolation was found in this retirement.

LETTER II.

Thick forest of beech trees.—Fearful glimpses of the torrent.—Throne of Moses.—Lofty bridge.—Distant view of the Convent.—Profound calm.—Enter the convent gate.—Arched aisle.—Welcomed by the father Coadjutor.—The Secretary and Procurator.—Conversation with them.—A walk amongst the cloisters and galleries.—Pictures of different Convents of the order.—Grand Hall adorned with historical paintings of St. Bruno's life.

We quitted this solitary cross to enter a thick forest of beech trees, that screened in some measure the precipices on which they grew, catching however every instant terrifying glimpses of the torrent below. Streams gushed from every crevice in the cliffs, and falling over the mossy roots and branches of the beech, hastened to join the great torrent, athwart which I every now and then remarked certain tottering bridges, and sometimes could distinguish a Carthusian crossing over to his her-

mitage, that just peeped above the woody labyrinths on the opposite shore.

Whilst I was proceeding amongst the innumerable trunks of the beech trees, my guide pointed out to me a peak, rising above the others, which he called the Throne of Moses. If that prophet had received his revelations in this desert, no voice need have declared it holy ground, for every part of it is stamped with such a sublimity of character as would alone be sufficient to impress the idea.

Having left these woods behind, and crossing a bridge of many lofty arches, I shuddered once more at the impetuosity of the torrent; and, mounting still higher, came at length to a kind of platform before two cliffs, joined by an arch of rock, under which we were to pursue our road. Below, we beheld again innumerable streams, turbulently precipitating themselves from the woods and lashing the base of the mountains, mossed over with a dark sea green.

In this deep hollow such mists and vapours prevailed as hindered my prying into its recesses; besides, such was the dampness of the air, that I hastened gladly from its neighbourhood, and passing under the second portal be-

held with pleasure the sunbeams gilding the throne of Moses.

It was now about ten o'clock, and my guide assured me I should soon discover the convent. Upon this information I took new courage, and continued my route on the edge of the rocks, till we struck into another gloomy grove. After turning about it for some time, we entered again into the glare of daylight, and saw a green valley skirted by ridges of cliffs and sweeps of wood before us. Towards the farther end of this inclosure, on a gentle acclivity, rose the revered turrets of the Carthusians, which extend in a long line on the brow of the hill; beyond them a woody amphitheatre majestically presents itself, terminated by spires of rock and promontories lost amongst the clouds.

The roar of the torrent was now but faintly distinguishable, and all the scenes of horror and confusion I had passed were succeeded by a sacred and profound calm. I traversed the valley with a thousand sensations I despair of describing, and stood before the gate of the convent with as much awe as some novice or candidate newly arrived to solicit the holy retirement of the order.

As admittance is more readily granted to the English than to almost any other nation, it was not long before the gates opened, and whilst the porter ordered our horses to the stable, we entered a court watered by two fountains and built round with lofty edifices, characterized by a noble simplicity.

The interior portal opening discovered an arched aisle, extending till the perspective nearly met, along which windows, but scantily distributed between the pilasters, admitted a pale solemn light, just sufficient to distinguish the objects with a picturesque uncertainty. We had scarcely set our feet on the pavement when the monks began to issue from an arch, about half way down, and passing in a long succession from their chapel, bowed reverently with much humility and meekness, and dispersed in silence, leaving one of their body alone in the aisle.

The father Coadjutor (for he only remained) advanced towards us with great courtesy, and welcomed us in a manner which gave me far more pleasure than all the frivolous salutations and affected greetings so common in the world beneath. After asking us a few indifferent questions, he called one of the lay brothers,

who live in the convent under less severe restrictions than the fathers, whom they serve, and ordering him to prepare our apartment, conducted us to a large square hall with casement windows, and, what was more comfortable, an enormous chimney, whose hospitable hearth blazed with a fire of dry aromatic fir, on each side of which were two doors that communicated with the neat little cells destined for our bed-chambers.

Whilst he was placing us round the fire, a ceremony by no means unimportant in the cold climate of these upper regions, a bell rang which summoned him to prayers. After charging the lay brother to set before us the best fare their desert afforded, he retired, and left us at full liberty to examine our chambers.

The weather lowered, and the casements permitted very little light to enter the apartment: but on the other side it was amply enlivened by the gleams of the fire, that spread all over a certain comfortable air, which even sunshine but rarely diffuses. Whilst the showers descended with great violence, the lay brother and another of his companions were placing an oval table, very neatly carved and covered with the finest

linen, in the middle of the hall; and, before we had examined a number of portraits which were hung in all the panels of the wainscot, they called us to a dinner widely different from what might have been expected in so dreary a situation. Our attendant friar was helping us to some Burgundy, of the happiest growth and vintage, when the coadjutor returned, accompanied by two other fathers, the secretary and procurator, whom he presented to us. You would have been both charmed and surprised with the cheerful resignation that appeared in their countenances, and with the easy turn of their conversation.

The coadjutor, though equally kind, was as yet more reserved: his countenance, however, spoke for him without the aid of words, and there was in his manner a mixture of dignity and humility, which could not fail to interest. There were moments when the recollection of some past event seemed to shade his countenance with a melancholy that rendered it still more affecting. I should suspect he formerly possessed a great share of natural vivacity (something of it being still, indeed, apparent in his more unguarded moments); but this spirit is almost

entirely subdued by the penitence and mortification of the order.

The secretary displayed a very considerable share of knowledge in the political state of Europe, furnished probably by the extensive correspondence these fathers preserve with the three hundred and sixty subordinate convents, dispersed throughout all those countries where the court of Rome still maintains its influence.

In the course of our conversation they asked me innumerable questions about England, where formerly, they said, many monasteries had belonged to their order; and principally that of Witham, which they had learnt to be now in my possession.

The secretary, almost with tears in his eyes, beseeched me to revere these consecrated edifices, and to preserve their remains, for the sake of St. Hugo, their canonized prior. I replied greatly to his satisfaction, and then declaimed so much in favour of St. Bruno, and the holy prior of Witham, that the good fathers grew exceedingly delighted with the conversation, and made me promise to remain some days with them. I readily complied with their request, and, continuing in the same strain, that had so agreeably

affected their ears, was soon presented with the works of St. Bruno, whom I so zealously admired.

After we had sat extolling them, and talking upon much the same sort of subjects for about an hour, the coadjutor proposed a walk amongst the cloisters and galleries, as the weather would not admit of any longer excursion. He leading the way, we ascended a flight of steps, which brought us to a gallery, on each side of which a vast number of pictures, representing the dependent convents, were ranged; for I was now in the capital of the order, where the general resides, and from whence he issues forth his commands to his numerous subjects; who depute the superiors of their respective convents, whether situated in the wilds of Calabria, the forests of Poland, or in the remotest districts of Portugal and Spain, to assist at the grand chapter, held annually under him, a week or two after Easter.

This reverend father died about ten days before our arrival: a week ago they elected the prior of the Carthusian convent at Paris in his room, and two fathers were now on their route to apprise him of their choice, and to salute him General of the Carthusians. During this inter-

regnum the coadjutor holds the first rank in the temporal, and the grand vicaire in the spiritual affairs of the order; both of which are very extensive.

If I may judge from the representation of the different convents, which adorn this gallery, there are many highly worthy of notice, for the singularity of their situations, and the wild beauties of the landscapes which surround them. The Venetian Chartreuse, placed in a woody island; and that of Rome, rising from amongst groups of majestic ruins, struck me as peculiarly pleasing. Views of the English monasteries hung formerly in such a gallery, but had been destroyed by fire, together with the old convent. The list only remains, with but a very few written particulars concerning them.

Having amused myself for some time with the pictures, and the descriptions the coadjutor gave me of them, we quitted the gallery and entered a kind of chapel, in which were two altars with lamps burning before them, on each side of a lofty portal. This opened into a grand coved hall, adorned with historical paintings of St. Bruno's life, and the portraits of the generals of the order, since the year of the great founder's

death (1085) to the present time. Under these portraits are the stalls for the superiors, who assist at the grand convocation. In front, appears the general's throne; above, hangs a representation of the canonized Bruno, crowned with stars.

LETTER III.

Cloisters of extraordinary dimensions.—Cells of the Monks. —Severity of the order.—Death-like calm.—The great Chapel.—Its interior.—Marvellous events relating to St. Bruno.—Retire to my cell.—Strange writings of St. Bruno. — Sketch of his Life. — Appalling occurrence. — Vision of the Bishop of Grenoble.—First institution of the Carthusian order.—Death of St. Bruno.—His translation.

The coadjutor seemed charmed with the respect with which I looked round on these holy objects; and if the hour of vespers had not been drawing near, we should have spent more time in the contemplation of Bruno's miracles, pourtrayed on the lower panels of the hall. We left that room to enter a winding passage (lighted by windows in the roof) that brought us to a cloister six hundred feet in length, from which branched off two others, joining a fourth of the same most extraordinary dimensions. Vast ranges of slender pillars extend round the different courts of

the edifice, many of which are thrown into gardens belonging to particular cells.

We entered one of them: its inhabitant received us with much civility, walked before us through a little corridor that looked on his garden, showed us his narrow dwelling, and, having obtained leave of the coadjutor to speak, gave us his benediction, and beheld us depart with concern. Nature has given this poor monk very considerable talents for painting. He has drawn the portrait of the late General, in a manner that discovers great facility of execution; but he is not allowed to exercise his pencil on any other subject, lest he should be amused; and amusement in this severe order is a crime. He had so subdued, so mortified an appearance, that I was not sorry to hear the bell, which summoned the coadjutor to prayers, and prevented my entering any more of the cells. We continued straying from cloister to cloister, and wandering along the winding passages and intricate galleries of this immense edifice, whilst the coadjutor was assisting at vespers.

In every part of the structure reigned the most death-like calm: no sound reached my ears but the "minute drops from off the eaves." I

sat down in a niche of the cloister, and fell into a profound reverie, from which I was recalled by the return of our conductor; who, I believe, was almost tempted to imagine, from the cast of my countenance, that I was deliberating whether I should not remain with them for ever.

But I soon roused myself, and testified some impatience to see the great chapel, at which we at length arrived after traversing another labyrinth of cloisters. The gallery immediately before its entrance appeared quite gay, in comparison with the others I had passed, and owes its cheerfulness to a large window (ornamented with slabs of polished marble) that admits the view of a lovely wood, and allows a full blaze of light to dart on the chapel door; which is also adorned with marble, in a plain but noble style of architecture.

The father sacristan stood ready on the steps of the portal to grant us admittance; and, throwing open the valves, we entered the chapel and were struck by the justness of its proportions, the simple majesty of the arched roof, and the mild solemn light equally diffused over every part of the edifice. No tawdry ornaments, no glaring pictures disgraced the sanctity of the

place. The high altar, standing distinct from the walls, which were hung with a rich velvet, was the only object on which many ornaments were lavished; and, it being a high festival, was clustered with statues of gold, shrines, and candelaba of the stateliest shape and most delicate execution. Four of the latter, of a gigantic size, were placed on the steps; which, together with part of the inlaid floor within the choir, were spread with beautiful carpets.

The illumination of so many tapers striking on the shrines, censers, and pillars of polished jasper, sustaining the canopy of the altar, produced a wonderful effect; and, as the rest of the chapel was visible only by the faint external light admitted from above, the splendour and dignity of the altar was enhanced by contrast. I retired a moment from it, and seating myself in one of the furthermost stalls of the choir, looked towards it, and fancied the whole structure had risen by "subtle magic," like an exhalation.

Here I remained several minutes breathing nothing but incense, and should not have quitted my station soon, had I not been apprehensive of disturbing the devotions of two aged fathers who had just entered, and were prostrating them-

selves before the steps of the altar. These venerable figures added greatly to the solemnity of the scene; which as the day declined increased every moment in splendour; for the sparkling of several lamps of chased silver that hung from the roofs, and the gleaming of nine huge tapers which I had not before noticed, began to be visible just as I left the chapel.

Passing through the sacristy, where lay several piles of rich embroidered vestments, purposely displayed for our inspection, we regained the cloister which led to our apartment, where the supper was ready prepared. We had scarcely finished it, when the coadjutor, and the fathers who had accompanied us before, returned, and ranging themselves round the fire, resumed the conversation about St. Bruno.

Finding me disposed by the wonders I had seen in the day to listen to things of a miraculous nature, they began to relate the inspirations they had received from him, and his mysterious apparitions. I was all attention, respect, and credulity. The old secretary worked himself up to such a pitch of enthusiasm, that I am very much inclined to imagine he believed in these moments all the marvellous events he re-

lated. The coadjutor being less violent in his pretensions to St. Bruno's modern miracles, contented himself with enumerating the noble works he had done in the days of his fathers, and in the old time before them.

It grew rather late before my kind hosts had finished their narrations, and I was not sorry, after all the exercise I had taken, to return to my cell, where everything invited to repose. I was charmed with the neatness and oddity of my little apartment; its cabin-like bed, oratory, and ebony crucifix; in short, every thing it contained; not forgetting the aromatic odour of the pine, with which it was roofed, floored, and wainscoted. The night was luckily dark. Had the moon appeared, I could not have prevailed upon myself to have quitted her till very late; but, as it happened, I crept into my cabin, and was by "whispering winds soon lulled asleep."

Eight o'clock struck next morning before I awoke; when, to my great sorrow, I found the peaks, which rose above the convent, veiled in vapours, and the rain descending with violence.

After we had breakfasted by the light of our fire (for the casements admitted but a very feeble

gleam), I sat down to the works of St. Bruno; of all medleys one of the strangest. Allegories without end; a theologico-natural history of birds, beasts, and fishes; several chapters on paradise; the delights of solitude; the glory of Solomon's temple; the new Jerusalem; and numberless other wonderful subjects, full of the loftiest enthusiasm. The revered author of this strangely abstruse and mystic volume was certainly a being of no common order, nor do we find in the wide circle of legendary traditions an event recorded, better calculated to inspire the utmost degree of religious terror than that which determined him to the monastic state.

St. Bruno was of noble descent, and possessed considerable wealth. Not less remarkable for the qualities of his mind, their assiduous cultivation obtained for him the chair of master of the great sciences in the University of Rheims, where he contracted an intimate friendship with Odo, afterwards Pope Urban II. Though it appears that a very cheering degree of public approbation, and all the blandishments of a society highly polished for the period, contributed, not unprofitably one should think, to fill up his time, always singular,

always visionary, he began early in life to loathe the world, and sigh after retirement.

But a most appalling occurrence converted these sighs into the deepest groans. A man, who had borne the highest character for the exercise of every virtue, died, and was being carried to the grave. The procession, of which Bruno formed a part, was moving slowly on, when a low, mournful sound issued from the bier. The corpse was distinctly seen to lift up its ghastly countenance, and as distinctly heard to articulate these words — "*I am summoned to trial.*" After an agonizing pause, the same terrific voice declared — "*I stand before the tribunal.*" Some further moments of amazement and horror having elapsed, the dead body lifted itself up a third time, and moving its livid lips uttered forth this dreadful sentence — "*I am condemned by the just judgment of God.*" "Alas! alas!" exclaimed Bruno — "of how little avail are apparent good works, or the favourable opinion of mankind!

Ubi fugiam nisi ad te? —

Thy mercies alone can save, and it is not in the frivolous and seductive intercourse of a worldly life those mercies can be obtained."

Stricken to the heart by these reflections, he hurried in a fever of terror and alarm (the sepulchral voice still ringing in his ears) to Grenoble, of which see one of his dearest friends, the venerable Hugo, had lately been appointed bishop.

This saintly prelate soothed the dreadful agitation of his spirits by relating to him a revelation he had just received in a dream.

"As I slept," said Hugo, "methought the desert mountains beyond Grenoble became suddenly visible in the dead of night by the streaming of seven lucid stars which hung directly over them. Whilst I remained absorbed in the contemplation of this wonder, an awful voice seemed to break the nocturnal silence, declaring their dreary solitudes thy future abode, O Bruno! — by thee to be consecrated as a retirement for holy men desirous of holding converse with their God. No shepherd's pipe shall be heard within these precincts; no huntsman's profane feet ever invade their fastnesses; nor shall woman ascend this mountain, or violate by her allurements the sacred repose of its inhabitants."

Such were the first institutions of the order as the inspired Bishop of Grenoble delivered them

to Bruno, who selecting a few persons that, like himself, contemned the splendours of the world and the charms of society, repaired with them to this spot; and, in the darkest parts of the forests which shade the most gloomy recesses of the mountains, founded the first convent of Carthusians, long since destroyed.

Several years passed away, whilst Bruno was employed in actions of the most exalted piety; and, the fame of his exemplary conduct reaching Rome, (where his friend had been lately invested with the papal tiara) the whole conclave was desirous of seeing him, and entreated Urban to invite him to Rome. The request of Christ's vicegerent was not to be refused; and Bruno quitted his beloved solitude, leaving some of his disciples behind, who propagated his doctrines, and tended zealously the infant order.

The pomp of the Roman court soon disgusted the rigid Bruno, who had weaned himself entirely from worldly affections.

Being wholly intent on futurity, the bustle and tumults of a busy metropolis became so irksome that he supplicated Urban for leave to retire; and, having obtained it, left Rome, and immediately seeking the wilds of Calabria,

there sequestered himself in a lonely hermitage, calmly expecting his last moments.

In his death there was no bitterness. A celestial radiance shone around him even before he closed his eyes upon this frail existence, and many a venerable witness has testified that the voices of angelic beings were heard calling him to come and receive his reward; but as the different accounts of his translation are not essentially varied, it would be tedious to recite them.

LETTER IV.

Mystic discourse. — A mountain ramble. — A benevolent Hermit.—Red light in the northern sky.—Lose my way in the solitary hills. — Approach of night.

I HAD scarcely finished taking extracts from the writings of this holy and highly-gifted personage when the dinner appeared, consisting of everything most delicate which a strict adherence to the rules of meagre could allow. The good fathers returned as usual before our repast was half over, and resumed as usual their mystic discourse, looking all the time rather earnestly into my countenance to observe the sort of effect their most marvellous narrations produced upon it.

Our conversation, which was beginning to take a gloomy and serious turn, was interrupted, I thought very agreeably, by the sudden intrusion of the sun, which, escaping from the clouds, shone in full splendour above the highest peak of the

mountains, and the vapours fleeting by degrees discovered the woods in all the freshness of their verdure. The pleasure I received from seeing this new creation rising to view was very lively, and, as the fathers assured me the humidity of their walks did not often continue longer than the showers, I left my hall.

Crossing the court, I hastened out of the gates, and running swiftly along a winding path on the side of the meadow, bordered by the forests, enjoyed the charms of the prospect, inhaled the perfume of the woodlands, and now turning towards the summits of the precipices that encircled this sacred inclosure, admired the glowing colours they borrowed from the sun, contrasted by the dark hues of the forest. Now, casting my eyes below, I suffered them to roam from valley to valley, and from one stream (beset with tall pines and tufted beech trees) to another. The purity of the air in these exalted regions, and the lightness of my own spirits, almost seized me with the idea of treading in that element.

Not content with the distant beauties of the hanging rocks and falling waters, I still kept running wildly along, with an eagerness and

rapidity that, to a sober spectator, would have given me the appearance of one possessed, and with reason, for I was affected with the scene to a degree I despair of expressing.

Whilst I was continuing my course, pursued by a thousand strange ideas, a father, who was returning from some distant hermitage, stopped my career, and made signs for me to repose myself on a bench erected under a neighbouring shed; and, perceiving my agitation and disordered looks, fancied, I believe, that one of the bears that lurk near the snows of the mountains had alarmed me by his sudden appearance.

The good old man, expressing by his gestures that he wished me to recover myself in quiet on the bench, hastened, with as much alacrity as his age permitted, to a cottage adjoining the shed, and returning in a few moments, presented me some water in a wooden bowl, into which he let fall several drops of an elixir composed of innumerable herbs, and having performed this deed of charity, signified, to me by a look, in which benevolence, compassion, and perhaps some little remains of curiosity were strongly painted, how sorry he was to

be restrained by his vow of silence from enquiring into the cause of my agitation, and giving me farther assistance. I answered also by signs, on purpose to carry on the adventure, and suffered him to depart with all his conjectures unsatisfied.

No sooner had I lost sight of the benevolent hermit than I started up, and pursued my path with my former agility, till I came to the edge of a woody dell, that divided the meadow on which I was running from the opposite promontory. Here I paused, and looking up at the cliffs, now but faintly illumined by the sun, which had been some time sinking on our narrow horizon, reflected that it would be madness to bewilder myself, at so late an hour, in the mazes of the forest. Being thus determined, I abandoned with regret the idea of penetrating into the lovely region before me, and contented myself for some moments with marking the pale tints of the evening gradually overspreading the cliffs, so lately flushed with the gleams of the setting sun.

But my eyes were soon diverted from contemplating these objects by a red light streaming over the northern sky, which attracted my

notice as I sat on the brow of a sloping hill, looking down what appeared to be a fathomless ravine blackened by the shade of impervious forests, above which rose majestically the varied peaks and promontories of the mountains.

The upland lawns, which hang at immense heights above the vale, next caught my attention. I was gazing alternately at them and the valley, when a long succession of light misty clouds, of strange fantastic shapes, issuing from a narrow gully between the rocks, passed on, like a solemn procession, over the hollow dale, midway between the stream that watered it below, and the summits of the cliffs on high.

The tranquillity of the region, the verdure of the lawn, environed by girdles of flourishing wood, and the lowing of the distant herds, filled me with the most pleasing sensations. But when I lifted up my eyes to the towering cliffs, and beheld the northern sky streaming with ruddy light, and the long succession of misty forms hovering over the space beneath, they became sublime and awful. The dews which began to descend, and the vapours which were rising from every dell, reminded me of the lateness of the hour; and it was with great reluctance that I turned

from the scene which had so long engaged my contemplation, and traversed slowly and silently the solitary meadows, over which I had hurried with such eagerness an hour ago.

Hill appeared after hill, and hillock succeeded hillock, which I had passed unnoticed before. Sometimes I imagined myself following a different path from that which had brought me to the edge of the deep valley. Another moment descending into the hollows between the hillocks that concealed the distant prospects from my sight, I fancied I had entirely mistaken my route, and expected every moment to be lost amongst the rude brakes and tangled thickets that skirted the eminences around.

As the darkness increased, my situation became still more and more forlorn. I had almost abandoned the idea of reaching the convent; and whenever I gained any swelling ground, looked above, below, and on every side of me, in hopes of discovering some glimmering lamp which might indicate a hermitage, whose charitable possessor, I flattered myself, would direct me to the monastery.

At length, after a tedious wandering along the hills, I found myself, unexpectedly, under

the convent walls; and, as I was looking for the gate, the attendant lay-brothers came out with lights, in order to search for me; scarcely had I joined them, when the Coadjutor and the Secretary came forward, with the kindest anxiety expressed their uneasiness at my long absence, and conducted me to my apartment, where Mr. Lettice was waiting, with no small degree of impatience; but I found not a word had been mentioned of my adventure with the hermit; so that, I believe, he strictly kept his vow till the day when the Carthusians are allowed to speak, and which happened after my departure.

LETTER V.

Pastoral Scenery of Valombré.—Ascent of the highest Peak in the Desert.—Grand amphitheatre of Mountains.—Farewell benediction of the Fathers.

We had hardly supped before the gates of the convent were shut, a circumstance which disconcerted me not a little, as the full moon gleamed through the casements, and the stars sparkling above the forests of pines, invited me to leave my apartment again, and to give myself up entirely to the spectacle they offered.

The coadjutor, perceiving that I was often looking earnestly through the windows, guessed my wishes, and calling a lay-brother, ordered him to open the gates, and wait at them till my return. It was not long before I took advantage of this permission, and escaping from the courts and cloisters of the monastery, all hushed in death-like stillness, ascended a green knoll,

which several ancient pines strongly marked with their shadows: there, leaning against one of their trunks, I lifted up my eyes to the awful barrier of surrounding mountains, discovered by the trembling silver light of the moon shooting directly on the woods which fringed their acclivities.

The lawns, the vast woods, the steep descents, the precipices, the torrents, lay all extended beneath, softened by a pale blueish haze, that alleviated, in some measure, the stern prospect of the rocky promontories above, wrapped in dark shadows. The sky was of the deepest azure, innumerable stars were distinguished with unusual clearness from this elevation, many of which twinkled behind the fir trees edging the promontories. White, grey, and darkish clouds came marching towards the moon, that shone full against a range of cliffs, which lift themselves far above the others. The hoarse murmur of the torrent, throwing itself from the distant wildernesses into the gloomy vales, was mingled with the blast that blew from the mountains.

It increased. The forests began to wave, black clouds rose from the north, and, as they

fleeted along, approached the moon, whose light they shortly extinguished. A moment of darkness succeeded; the gust was chill and melancholy; it swept along the desert, and then subsiding, the vapours began to pass away, and the moon returned; the grandeur of the scene was renewed, and its imposing solemnity was increased by her presence. Inspiration was in every wind.

I followed some impulse, which drove me to the summit of the mountains before me; and there, casting a look on the whole extent of wild woods and romantic precipices, thought of the days of St. Bruno. I eagerly contemplated every rock that formerly might have met his eyes; drank of the spring which tradition says he was wont to drink of; and ran to every pine, whose withered appearance bespoke the most remote antiquity, and beneath which, perhaps, the saint had reposed himself, when worn with vigils, or possessed with the sacred spirit of his institutions. It was midnight before I returned to the convent and retired to my quiet chamber, but my imagination was too much disturbed, and my spirits far too active, to allow me any rest for some time.

I had scarcely fallen asleep, when I was suddenly awakened by a furious blast, which drove open my casement, for it was a troubled and tempestuous night, and let in the roar of the tempest. In the intervals of the storm, in those moments when the winds seemed to pause, the faint sounds of the choir stole upon my ear; but were swallowed up the next instant by the redoubled fury of the gust, which was still increased by the roar of the waters.

I started from my bed, closed the casement, and composed myself as well as I was able; but no sooner had the sunbeams entered my window, than I arose, and gladly leaving my cell, hastened to the same knoll, where I had stood the night before. The storm was dissipated, and the pure morning air delightfully refreshing: every tree, every shrub, glistened with dew. A gentle wind breathed upon the woods, and waved the fir-trees on the cliffs, which, free from clouds, rose distinctly into the clear blue sky. I strayed from the knoll into the valley between the steeps of wood and the turrets of the convent, and passed the different buildings, destined for the manufacture of the articles necessary to the fathers; for nothing is

worn or used within this inclosure, which comes from the profane world.

Traversing the meadows and a succession of little dells, where I was so lately bewildered, I came to a bridge thrown over the torrent, which I crossed; and here followed a slight path that brought me to an eminence, covered with a hanging wood of beech-trees feathered to the ground, from whence I looked down the narrow pass towards Grenoble. Perceiving a smoke to arise from the groves which nodded over the eminence, I climbed up a rocky steep, and, after struggling through a thicket of shrubs, entered a smooth, sloping lawn, framed in by woody precipices; at one extremity of which I discovered the cottage, whose smoke had directed me to this sequestered spot; and, at the other, a numerous group of cattle, lying under the shade of some beech-trees, whilst several friars, with long beards and russet garments, were employed in milking them.

The luxuriant foliage of the woods, clinging round the steeps that skirted the lawn; its gay, sunny exposition; the groups of sleek, dappled cows, and the odd employment of the friars, so little consonant with their venerable beards,

formed a picturesque and certainly very singular spectacle. I, who had been accustomed to behold "milk-maids singing blithe," and tripping lightly along with their pails, was not a little surprised at the silent gravity with which these figures shifted their trivets from cow to cow; and it was curious to see with what adroitness they performed their functions, managing their long beards with a facility and cleanliness equally admirable.

I watched all their movements for some time, concealed by the trees, before I made myself visible; but no sooner did I appear on the lawn, than one of the friars quitted his trivet, very methodically set down his pail, and coming towards me with an open, smiling countenance, desired me to refresh myself with some bread and milk. A second, observing what was going forward, was resolved not to be exceeded in an hospitable act, and, quitting his pail too, hastened into the woods, from whence he returned in a few minutes with some strawberries, very neatly enveloped in fresh leaves. These hospitable, milking fathers, next invited me to the cottage, whither I declined going, as I preferred the shade of the beeches; so, throwing myself on the dry aro-

matic herbage, I enjoyed the pastoral character of the scene with all possible glee.

Not a cloud darkened the heavens; every object smiled; innumerable gaudy flies glanced in the sunbeams that played in a clear spring by the cottage; I saw with pleasure the sultry glow of the distant cliffs and forests, whilst indolently reclined in the shade, listening to the summer hum; one hour passed after another neglected away, during my repose in this most delightful of valleys.

When I returned unwillingly to the convent, the only topic on which I could converse was the charms of Valmobré, for so is this beautifully wooded region most appropriately called. Notwithstanding the indifference with which I now regarded the prospects that surrounded the monastery, I could not disdain an offer made by one of the friars, of conducting me to the summit of the highest peak in the desert.

Pretty late in the afternoon I set out with my guide, and, following his steps through many forests of pine, and wild apertures among them, strewed with fragments, arrived at a chapel, built on a mossy rock, and dedicated to St. Bruno.

Having once more drunk of the spring that issues from the rock on which this edifice is raised, I moved forward, keeping my eyes fixed on a lofty green mountain, from whence rises a vast cliff, spiring up to a surprising elevation; and which (owing to the sun's reflection on a transparent mist hovering around it) was tinged with a pale visionary light. This object was the goal to which I aspired; and redoubling my activity, I made the best of my way over rude ledges of rocks, and crumbled fragments of the mountain interspersed with firs, till I came to the green steeps I had surveyed at a distance.

These I ascended with some difficulty, and, leaving a few scattered beech-trees behind, in full leaf, shortly bade adieu to summer, and entered the regions of spring; for, as I approached that part of the mountain next the summit, the trees, which I found there rooted in the crevices, were but just beginning to unfold their leaves, and every spot of the greensward was covered with cowslips and violets.

After taking a few moments' repose, my guide prepared to clamber amongst the rocks, and I followed him with as much alertness as I was able, till laying hold of the trunk of a withered

pine, we sprang upon a small level space, where I seated myself, and beheld far beneath me the vast desert and dreary solitudes, amongst which appeared, thinly scattered, the green meadows and hanging lawns. The eye next overlooking the barrier of mountains, ranged through immense tracts of distant countries; the plains where Lyons is situated; the woodlands and lakes of Savoy; amongst which that of Bourget was near enough to discover its beauties, all glowing with the warm haze of the setting sun.

My situation was too dizzy to allow a long survey, so turning my eyes from the terrific precipice, I gladly beheld an opening in the rocks, through which we passed into a little irregular glen of the smoothest greensward, closed in on one side by the great peak, and on the others by a ridge of sharp pinnacles, which crown the range of white cliffs I had so much admired the night before, when brightened by the moon.

The singular situation of this romantic spot invited me to remain in it till the sun was about to sink on the horizon: during which time I visited every little cave delved in the ridges of rock, and gathered large sprigs of the mezereon and rhododendron in full bloom, which with a

surprising variety of other plants carpeted this lovely glen. A luxuriant vegetation,

> That on the green turf suck'd the honey'd showers,
> And purpled all the ground with vernal flowers.

My guide, perceiving I was ready to mount still higher, told me it would be in vain, as the beds of snow that lie eternally in some fissures of the mountain, must necessarily impede my progress; but, finding I was very unwilling to abandon the enterprise, he showed me a few notches in the peak, by which we might ascend, though not without danger. This prospect rather abated my courage, and the wind rising, drove several thick clouds round the bottom of the peak, which increasing every minute, shortly screened the green mountain and all the forest from our sight. A sea of vapours soon undulated beneath my feet, and lightning began to flash from a dark angry cloud that hung over the valleys and deluged them with storms, whilst I was securely standing under the clear expanse of æther.

But the hour did not admit of my remaining long in this proud station; so descending, I was soon obliged to pass through the vapours, and, carefully following my guide (for a false step

might have caused my destruction) wound amongst the declivities, till we left the peak behind, and just as we reached the green mountain which was moistened with the late storm, the clouds fleeted and the evening recovered its serenity.

Leaving the chapel of St. Bruno on the right, we entered the woods, and soon emerged from them into a large pasture, under the grand amphitheatre of mountains, having a gentle ascent before us, beyond which appeared the neat blue roofs and glittering spires of the convent, where we arrived as the moon was beginning to assume her empire.

I need not say I rested well after the interesting fatigues of the day. The next morning early, I quitted my kind hosts with great reluctance. The coadjutor and two other fathers accompanied me to the outward gate, and there within the solemn circle of the desert bestowed on me their benediction.

It seemed indeed to come from their hearts, nor would they leave me till I was an hundred paces from the convent; and then, laying their hands on their breasts, declared that if ever I was disgusted with the world, here was an asylum.

I was in a melancholy mood when I traced back all the windings of my road, and when I found myself beyond the last gate in the midst of the wide world again, it increased.

We returned to Les Echelles; from thence to Chambery, and, instead of going through Aix, passed by Annecy; but nothing in all the route engaged my attention, nor had I any pleasing sensations till I beheld the glassy lake of Geneva, and its lovely environs.

I rejoiced then because I knew of a retirement on its banks where I could sit and think of Valombré.

SALEVE.

SALEVE.

LETTER I.

Revisit the trees on the summit of Saleve.—Pas d'Echelle. —Moneti.—Bird's-eye prospects.—Alpine flowers.—Extensive view from the summit of Saleve.—Youthful enthusiasm.—Sad realities.

I HAD long wished to revisit the holt of trees so conspicuous on the summit of Saleve, and set forth this morning to accomplish that purpose. Brandoin an artist, once the delight of our travelling lords and ladies, accompanied me. We rode pleasantly and sketchingly along through Carouge to the base of the mountain, taking views every now and then of picturesque stumps and cottages.

At length, after a good deal of lackadaisical loitering on the banks of the Arve, we reached a sort of goats' path, leading to some steps cut

in the rock, and justly called the Pas d'Echelle. I need not say we were obliged to dismount and toil up this ladder, beyond which rise steeps of verdure shaded by walnuts.

These brought us to Moneti, a rude straggling village, with its church tower embosomed in gigantic limes. We availed ourselves of their deep cool shade to dine as comfortably as a whole posse of withered hags, who seemed to have been just alighted from their broomsticks, would allow us.

About half past three, a sledge drawn by four oxen was got ready to drag us up to the holt of trees, the goal to which we were tending: stretching ourselves on the straw spread over our vehicle, we set off along a rugged path, conducted aslant the steep slope of the mountain, vast prospects opening as we ascended; to our right the crags of the little Saleve—the variegated plains of Gex and Chablais, separated by the lake; below, Moneti, almost concealed in wood; behind, the mole, lifting up its pyramidical summit amidst the wild amphitheatre of glaciers, which lay this evening in dismal shadow, the sun being overcast, the Jura

half lost in rainy mists, and a heavy storm darkening the Fort de l'Ecluse. Except a sickly gleam cast on the snows of the Buet, not a ray of sunshine enlivened our landscape.

This sorrowful colouring agreed but too well with the dejection of my spirits. I suffered melancholy recollections to take full possession of me, and glancing my eyes over the vast map below, sought out those spots where I had lived so happy with my lovely Margaret. On them did I eagerly gaze—absorbed in the consciousness of a fatal, irreparable loss, I little noticed the transports expressed by my companion at the grand effects of light and shade, which obeyed the movements of the clouds; nor was I more attentive to the route of our oxen, which, perfectly familiarized with precipices, preferred their edge to the bank on the other side, and by this choice gave us an opportunity of looking down more than a thousand feet perpendicularly on the wild shrubberies and shattered rocks deep below, at the base of the mountain. In general I shrink back from such bird's-eye prospects with my head in a whirl, and yet, by

a most unaccountable fascination, feel a feverish impulse to throw myself into the very gulph I abhor; but to-day I lay in passive indifference, listlessly extended on our moving bed.

Its progress being extremely deliberate, we had leisure to observe, as we crept along, a profusion of Alpine flowers; but none of those gorgeous insects mentioned by Saussure as abounding on Saleve were fluttering about them. This was no favourable day for butterfly excursions; the flowers laden with heavy drops, the forerunners of still heavier rain, hung down their heads. We passed several chalets, formed of mud and stone, instead of the neat timber, with which those on the Swiss mountains are constructed. Meagre peasants, whose sallow countenances looked quite of a piece with the sandy hue of their habitations, kept staring at us from crevices and hollow places: the fresh roses of a garden are not more different from the rank weeds of an unhealthy swamp, than these wretched objects from the ruddy inhabitants of Switzerland.

My heart sank as we were driven alongside of one of these squalid groups, huddled together

under a blasted beech in expectation of a storm. The wind drove the smoke and sparks of a fire just kindled at the root of the tree, full in the face of an infant, whose mother had abandoned it to implore our charity with outstretched withered hands. The poor helpless being filled the air with wailings, and being tightly swaddled up in yellow rags, according to Savoyarde custom, exhibited an appearance in form and colour not unlike that of an overgrown pumpkin thrown on the ground out of the way. How should I have enjoyed setting its limbs at liberty, and transporting it to the swelling bosom of a Bernese peasant! such as I have seen in untaxed garments, red, blue and green, with hair falling in braids mixed with flowers and silver trinkets, hurrying along to some wake or wedding, with that firm step and smiling hilarity which the consciousness of freedom inspires.

A few minutes dragging beyond the tree just mentioned, we reached the bold verdant slopes of delicate short herbage which crown the crags of the mountain. We now moved smoothly along the turf, brushing it with our hands to

extract its aromatic fragrance, and having no longer rough stones to encounter, our conveyance became so agreeable that we regretted our arrival before a chalet, under a clump of weather-beaten beech. These are the identical trees, so far and widely discovered, on the summit of Saleve, and the point to which we had been tending.

Seating ourselves on the very edge of a rocky cornice, we surveyed the busy crowded territory of Geneva, the vast reach of the lake, its coast, thickset with castles, towns, and villages, and the long line of the Jura protecting these richly cultivated possessions. Turning round, we traced the course of the Arve up to its awful sanctuary, the Alps of Savoy, above which rose the Mont-Blanc in deadly paleness, backed by a gloomy sky; nothing could form a stronger contrast to the populous and fertile plains in front of the mountain than this chaos of snowy peaks and melancholy deserts, the loftiest in the old world, held up in the air, and beaten, in spite of summer, with wintry storms

I know not how long we should have remained examining the prospect had the weather been

favourable, and had we enjoyed one of those serene evenings to be expected in the month of July. Many such have I passed in my careless childish days, stretched out on the brow of this very mountain, contemplating the heavenly azure of the lake, the innumerable windows of the villas below blazing in the setting sun, and the glaciers suffused by its last ray with a blushing pink. How often, giving way to youthful enthusiasm, have I peopled these singularly varied peaks with gnomes and fairies, the distributors of gold and crystal to those who adventurously scaled their lofty abode.

This evening my fancy was led to no such gay aërial excursions; sad realities chained it to the earth, and to the scene before my eyes, which, in lowering, sombre hue, corresponded with my interior gloom. A rude blast driving us off the margin of the precipices, we returned to the shelter of the beech. There we found some disappointed butterfly catchers, probably of the watch-making tribe, and a silly boy gaping after them with a lank net and empty boxes. This being Monday, I thought the Saleve had been delivered from such intruders; but it seems that

the rage for natural history has so victoriously pervaded all ranks of people in the republic, that almost every day in the week sends forth some of its journeymen to ransack the neighbouring cliffs, and transfix unhappy butterflies.

Silversmiths and toymen, possessed by the spirit of De Luc and De Saussure's lucubrations, throw away the light implements of their trade, and sally forth with hammer and pickaxe to pound pebbles and knock at the door of every mountain for information. Instead of furbishing up tea-spoons and sorting watch-chains, they talk of nothing but quartz and feldspath. One flourishes away on the durability of granite, whilst another treats calcareous rocks with contempt; but as human pleasures are seldom perfect and permanent, acrimonious disputes too frequently interrupt the calm of the philosophic excursion. Squabbles arise about the genus of a coralite, or concerning that element which has borne the greatest part in the convulsion of nature. The advocate of water too often sneaks home to his wife with a tattered collar, whilst the partisan of fire and volcanoes lies vanquished in a puddle, or winding up the clue of his argument in a solitary

ditch. I cannot help thinking so diffused a taste for fossils and petrifactions of no very particular benefit to the artisans of Geneva, and that watches would go as well, though their makers were less enlightened.

LETTER II.

Chalet under the Beech-trees. — A mountain Bridge. — Solemnity of the Night. — The Comedie. — Relaxation of Genevese Morality.

It began to rain just as we entered the chalet under the beech-trees, and one of the dirtiest I ever crept into—it would have been uncharitable not to have regretted the absence of swine, for here was mud and filth enough to have insured their felicity. A woman, whose teeth of a shining whiteness were the only clean objects I could discover, brought us foaming bowls of cream and milk, with which we regaled ourselves, and then got into our vehicle. We but too soon left the smooth herbage behind, and passed about an hour in rambling down the mountain pelted by the showers, from which we took shelter under the limes at Moneti.

Here we should have drunk our tea in peace

and quietness, had it not been for the incursion of a gang of bandylegged watchmakers, smoking their pipes, and scraping their fiddles, and snapping their fingers, with all that insolent vulgarity so characteristic of the Rue-basse portion of the Genevese community. We got out of their way, you may easily imagine, as fast as we were able, and descending a rough road, most abominably strewn with rolling pebbles, arrived at the bridge d'Etrombieres just as it fell dark. The mouldering planks with which the bridge is awkwardly put together, sounded suspiciously hollow under the feet of our horses, and had it not been for the friendly light of a pine torch which a peasant brought forth, we might have been tumbled into the Arve.

It was a mild solemn night, the rainy clouds were dissolving away with a murmur of distant thunder so faint as to be scarcely heard. From time to time a flash of summer lightning discovered the lonely tower of Moneti on the edge of the lesser Saleve. The ghostly tales, which the old curè of the mountains had told me at a period when I hungered and thirsted after supernatural narrations, recurred to my memory, in all

their variety of horrors, and kept it fully employed till I found myself under the walls of Geneva. The gates were shut, but I knew they were to be opened again at ten o'clock for the convenience of those returning from the *Comedie.*

The *Comedie* is become of wonderful importance; but a few years ago the very name of a play was held in such abhorrence by the spiritual consistory of Geneva and its obsequious servants, which then included the best part of the republic, that the partakers and abettors of such diversions were esteemed on the high road to eternal perdition. Though, God knows, I am unconscious of any extreme partiality for Calvin, I cannot help thinking his severe discipline wisely adapted to the moral constitution of this starch bit of a republic which he took to his grim embraces. But these days of rigidity and plainness are completely gone by; the soft spirit of toleration, so eloquently insinuated by Voltaire, has removed all thorny fences, familiarized his numerous admirers with every innovation, and laughed scruples of every nature to scorn. Voltaire, indeed, may justly be styled the architect of that gay well-ornamented bridge, by which

freethinking and immorality have been smuggled into the republic under the mask of philosophy and liberality and sentiment. These monsters, like the Sin and Death of Milton, have made speedy and irreparable havoc. To facilitate their operations, rose the genius of "Rentes Viagères" at his bidding, tawdry villas with their little pert groves of poplar and horse-chesnut start up—his power enables Madame C. D. the bookseller's lady to amuse the D. of G. with assemblies, sets parisian cabriolets and english phaetons rolling from one faro table to another, and launches innumerable pleasure parties with banners and popguns on the lake, drumming and trumpeting away their time from morn till evening. I recollect, not many years past, how seldom the echoes of the mountains were profaned by such noises, and how rarely the drones of Geneva, if any there were in that once industrious city, had opportunities of displaying their idleness; but now Dissipation reigns triumphant, and to pay the tribute she exacts, every fool runs headlong to throw his scrapings into the voracious whirlpool of annuities; little caring, provided he feeds high and lolls in his carriage, what be-

comes of his posterity. I had ample time to make these reflections, as the *Comedie* lasted longer than usual.

Luckily the night improved, the storms had rolled away, and the moon rising from behind the crags of the lesser Saleve cast a pleasant gleam on the smooth turf of plain-palais, where we walked to and fro above half an hour. We had this extensive level almost entirely to ourselves, no light glimmered in any window, no sound broke the general stillness, except a low murmur proceeding from a group of chesnut trees. There, snug under a garden wall on a sequestered bench, sat two or three Genevois of the old stamp, chewing the cud of sober sermons—men who receive not more than seven or eight per cent. for their money; there sat they waiting for their young ones, who had been seduced to the theatre.

A loud hubbub and glare of flambeaus proclaiming the end of the play, we left these good folks to their rumination, and regaining our carriage rattled furiously through the streets of Geneva, once so quiet, so silent at these hours, to the no small terror and annoyance of those whom Rentes Viageres had not yet provided

with a speedier conveyance than their own legs, or a brighter satellite than an old cook-maid with a candle and lantern.

It was eleven o'clock before we reached home, and near two before I retired to rest, having sat down immediately to write this letter whilst the impressions of the day were fresh in my memory.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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